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25 February 2021

Dominique Osborne  
Executive Headteacher  
Thomas Hinderwell Primary Academy  
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North Yorkshire  
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Dear Mrs Osborne

**Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Thomas Hinderwell Primary Academy**

Following my remote inspection with Chris Cook, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 3 and 4 February 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken to provide education to all pupils during the current circumstances.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 (2) of the Education Act 2005 (as amended) and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for visiting schools while routine inspections remain temporarily suspended. It was additional to the usual monitoring process for schools that are judged to have serious weaknesses.

Following changes to government guidance and the imposition of COVID-19 (coronavirus) lockdown restrictions, this monitoring inspection was carried out remotely. As such, the range of evidence available to inspectors was narrower than would normally be the case during an on-site inspection. As a result, this letter provides a more limited level of assurance than our usual monitoring reports.

The inspection took place because the school was judged to have serious weaknesses at its previous section 5 inspection. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in February 2020.

Having considered all the evidence and taking into account the impact of COVID-19 on the school, I am of the opinion that at this time:

**Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action to provide education in the current circumstances.**

## Context

- The head of school was appointed in June 2020. A new English Lead and two teachers have joined the school since the previous inspection. The governing body has reconstituted. A smaller Academy Improvement Board (AIB) is now in place. The previous chair of governors is currently co-chair, alongside another governor.
- In the autumn term 2020, approximately one quarter of all pupils had to be educated remotely. Two thirds of pupils who had to self-isolate were in Years 5 and 6. This was mainly due to the closure of 'bubbles'.
- At the time of this inspection, almost all pupils who are vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are attending on site. Approximately one third of all pupils are attending school. The remaining two thirds are learning remotely.

## Main findings

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have concentrated on improving pupils' knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders place a strong emphasis on ensuring that the curriculum is accessible to all pupils. They have adapted the curriculum so that it can be delivered in school and remotely. All pupils have access to education in the current circumstances.
- In September 2020, you implemented new systems and procedures to improve the attendance of pupils. A strategy to improve behaviour included 'Well-being Wednesdays'. This also provides an opportunity to engage with parents. Singing sessions promote the mental health of pupils and staff.
- During the current national lockdown, you are trying to make sure that pupils who are learning at home are covering the same curriculum content as the pupils who are on site. You have worked closely with the trust to develop the school's remote learning offer. A home learning package is available either online or in paper packs. Teachers personalise learning activities to promote engagement with the remote learning offer. This is fostered through weekly telephone calls to each family to check on provision and well-being.
- Leaders are checking the quality of education provided to pupils. Pupils at home learn through a mixture of live and recorded lessons. Teachers make regular checks on pupils accessing home learning, including how well they are doing in their learning. They provide written comments to pupils about their work and use this information to plan the next steps in learning. Misconceptions are retaught through weekly live lessons.
- If pupils are not accessing learning, or are struggling with remote learning, they are offered a place in school. This is particularly the case for vulnerable pupils. Where pupils do not have access to online learning, devices or paper

packs of work are provided. Pastoral staff make regular contact with these pupils to check on their learning and well-being.

- You have placed reading at the heart of the curriculum. The teaching of phonics is a high priority for the school. Teachers in the early years and key stage 1 are continuing to teach daily phonics lessons. Teachers record reading lessons for those pupils learning from home. Pupils at risk of falling behind are offered further reading sessions. These are either in class or accessed remotely and are providing pupils with the additional help in reading that they need to catch up. There is similar provision in key stage 2. This is helping most pupils to catch up.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has personalised the school's provision map to support pupils with SEND. Pupils have additional resources targeted to meet their individual needs. During this national lockdown, you have offered all pupils with SEND a full-time place in school. Teachers and teaching assistants are adapting the work set to be suitable for them, and the SENCo is monitoring their engagement. From the evidence we gathered, most pupils with SEND appeared to be engaging with learning and making progress towards their personal targets.
- Governors receive a wealth of information from leaders about the work of the school. Remote meetings enable governors continue to hold leaders to account. AIB members have oversight to an area of school improvement. They question and challenge leaders, with a particular focus on those pupils learning from home. Governors are mindful of staff well-being. They are also providing pastoral support when required.
- The trust has been instrumental in the appointment of key staff. Trust directors make regular visits to the school. They check leaders' actions and ensure the pace of improvement is being maintained. They support leaders with the development of curriculum plans. Members of the trust also quality assure the learning offer the school provides. This applies to learning offered both in school and at home.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, representatives from the multi-academy trust, pupils, staff and representatives of those responsible for governance to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also examined leaders' plans and viewed some samples of learning that is being provided remotely. They talked to some pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2 about their current experiences in school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the David Ross Education multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for North Yorkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Gill Wild  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**