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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Louise Wright
Acting headteacher
Morley Place Academy
Old Road
Conisbrough
Doncaster
South Yorkshire
DN12 3LZ

Dear Mrs Wright

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Morley Place Academy

Following my remote inspection with Zoe Lightfoot, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 3 and 4 of 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 2019.

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 previous headteacher left the school at the end of the autumn term 2020. The acting headteacher took up post on 1 January 2021. The Chair of the Academy Advisory Board took up post in January 2021.
- Across the autumn term 2020, one class of pupils needed to be educated remotely for a period of time due to COVID-19. This involved less than 10% of pupils in the school.
- At the time of this inspection, around 80% of pupils are being educated at home. Around 20% of pupils are attending school on site each day. Around 50% of the school's vulnerable pupils and around 30% of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are attending school on site.

Main findings

- As acting headteacher, you are well supported by more experienced executive principals in the trust. Together, you are taking the necessary actions to provide education. You have systematically removed the barriers that could prevent any of your pupils from getting an education in the current circumstances. You are rising to the challenges posed by the current national lockdown.
- With the support of the trust, you have completed a comprehensive review of the school's curriculum. In curriculum plans, there is evidence of more careful consideration of the knowledge to be taught and of the sequence of delivery. Teachers began to teach the new curriculum from last September, across all subjects.
- Across the summer and autumn, you successfully built the infrastructure needed to provide remote education. Consequently, at the start of the current national lockdown, you immediately switched to teaching most pupils from home. No learning time was lost. All pupils are receiving around four hours of learning each day. This includes live lessons, recorded activities and time for pupils to work independently. You have provided some families with IT equipment, ensuring all pupils at home have access to education.
- Despite the challenges of this national lockdown, you have continued to teach your new curriculum. Teachers told us that they have had helpful training and know how to adapt their teaching for pupils at home or in school. Only occasionally, for example in art and PE, are teachers having to change the planned sequence of learning. The curriculum is being covered at the usual pace. Every effort is being made to prevent pupils from falling behind. Pupils attending school on site join the same lessons and cover the same curriculum each day as their peers who are learning at home.

- Reading is at the heart of your curriculum. Each topic you teach is linked to a carefully selected book. Weaker readers who need extra help are continuing to be taught phonics each day by their teacher. Pupils are being provided with books from the school's reading programme that match their stage of development. Teachers continue to work intensively with these pupils through small group or one-to-one live teaching sessions. New reading areas have been created within the school. You have not been deflected from your ambition to raise standards in reading.
- The school is providing thoughtful support for pupils with SEND. In the recorded lessons we reviewed, teachers were skilled at supporting pupils' learning, whether they were on site or learning from home. We saw teachers providing precise explanations. They continually checked that pupils knew what to do. We also reviewed examples of teachers taking care to provide feedback in ways that suited individual pupils. We learned that teachers and pupils have adapted to the current circumstances impressively.
- You are making frequent checks on pupils' safety and welfare. You make regular contact with vulnerable pupils who are not in school. Teachers see these pupils every day in live lessons.
- Your curriculum includes ongoing support for pupils' personal development. You are covering topics to promote good mental health in your 'Thrive Thursdays'. You have added a digital 'worry box' to your website so that any pupil can easily raise a concern.
- The trustees, chief executives and members of the Academy Advisory Board (AAB) are providing strong support to the school. They are holding you to account for the quality of remote education. Rapid progress has been made to ensure that pupils can be taught effectively from home. The trust has been ambitious and responsive.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We held meetings with the acting headteacher and other senior leaders, the multi-academy trust deputy chief executive officer, the chair of the AAB, the trust's remote education leader, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, pupils and teachers to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also looked at recorded examples of live lessons, examples of pupils' work completed during this national lockdown, curriculum planning, photographs of pupils' work on display in school and examples of lesson resources provided for pupils.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Delta Academies Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the

director of children's services for Doncaster. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Chris Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector