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3 March 2021

Karen Banford  
Headteacher  
Cherry Orchard Primary School  
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Worcester  
Worcestershire  
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Dear Mrs Banford

**Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Cherry Orchard Primary School**

Following my remote inspection with Wayne Simner, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 10 and 11 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 require special measures.

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 require special measures at its previous section 5 inspection. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in January 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

- There have been considerable leadership and staffing changes since the previous inspection. You and the deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2020. Five teachers and five teaching assistants have left the school. Two new teachers have been appointed. A new chair of governors and three new governors joined the governing body in December 2020. Plans are in place for the school to join a multi-academy trust in April 2021.
- In the autumn term 2020, approximately one fifth of pupils spent some time being educated remotely because of COVID-19. This included a class in Year 3 and a class in Year 4, as well as individual pupils in other classes.
- Three quarters of pupils were learning remotely at the time of this inspection. Approximately half of pupils who are vulnerable and around two thirds of those with education, health and care plans were attending on site.

## Main findings

- Since you joined the school, you have rightly prioritised improving the curriculum. Your aim is to ensure that lessons are well planned and sequenced in all subjects. Leaders have already made improvements to the way that lessons are planned and delivered in reading and writing. Mathematics will be the next area of focus. You intend to revise other subjects later in the year.
- Leaders have ensured that teachers have the equipment and expertise they need to deliver lessons remotely. As a result, staff are able to deliver a range of subjects to all pupils. Teachers adjust lesson content, so that pupils being educated at home access the same learning as pupils in school. Daily lessons in reading, writing and mathematics are sequenced well to help pupils know more and remember more. However, this is not the case in all subjects, such as art and music. In these subjects, remote lessons do not always build on what pupils already know. You and your team regularly review the remote learning offer and make improvements when needed. For example, leaders have recently introduced opportunities for pupils to interact with teachers and classmates using video conferencing facilities.
- You recently introduced a new approach to teaching early reading. Leaders organised phonics training for all teachers and teaching assistants. This has helped teachers to plan well-sequenced phonics lessons that can be delivered in school or at home. Teachers use pre-recorded videos to provide all younger pupils with a daily phonics lesson. Some pupils who are working at home upload recordings of themselves reading. This allows staff to hear them read regularly.
- Staff continue to work with families and external agencies to support vulnerable pupils. Senior leaders check that this group of pupils engage with

their lessons when they are working at home. Leaders take swift action if they are not. Staff make regular phone calls to help pupils with their work and monitor their well-being. As part of these calls, adults identify any barriers that may be preventing pupils from learning at home. For example, some families have been provided with electronic devices, where required.

- Leaders arranged an external review of the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This resulted in changes to the way that support for pupils with SEND is organised. Staff have received additional training. Consequently, staff have a better understanding of how to support these pupils. As a result, pupils with SEND who are currently working in school or at home, complete work that is well matched to their needs. Some pupils receive additional individual support when needed.
- There have been recent changes to the governing body. These changes have strengthened the governance of the school. Governors are aware that there is still more work to be done to improve the school. They are supporting leaders to improve the curriculum. Governors are now starting to provide leaders with appropriate levels of challenge and support. They are taking the right steps to assure themselves that pupils are accessing education in the current circumstances.
- The local authority works alongside a local multi-academy trust to support the school. This support has helped to improve the effectiveness of leadership and governance. Advisers are supporting leaders in their work to develop the curriculum. This includes developing subject leaders' expertise in monitoring the delivery of the curriculum. The trust has also supported the school in designing their remote education offer during this period of partial school closure.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, the deputy headteacher, curriculum and phase leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, teachers, pupils, the chair of the local governing body and a representative from the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also viewed a range of examples from the school's remote education offer. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 254 free-text responses, and 71 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Worcestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Leonard  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**