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4 March 2021

Matt Green
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Dear Mr Green

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Southfield Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Shaheen Hussain, seconded inspector, 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 July 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.

Leaders and those responsible for governance should take further action to:

- ensure that the important knowledge that pupils must learn and remember is set out in detail for each subject and each year group.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, seven teachers, including the headteacher and deputy headteacher, have left the school. Every governor who was in post at the time of the last inspection has resigned. You took up your position as headteacher in October 2019. During that autumn term, one other teacher joined the school and five new governors were appointed.
- All pupils were educated at home, for at least two weeks, at some point during the autumn term 2020.
- Currently, most pupils are being educated at home. Just less than half of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are learning at home. The majority of pupils that you have identified as being vulnerable are being taught in school.

Main findings

- Since your appointment in October 2019, one of your priorities has been to work with staff to develop a new curriculum for the school. Together, you have ensured that the full range of national curriculum subjects are taught throughout the school. Your curriculum plans, in subjects other than English and mathematics, set out the 'topics' that pupils will study each term. The plans do not yet set out in detail the knowledge that pupils must learn and remember for each subject. This means that teachers cannot reliably build on what pupils already know.
- Nevertheless, teachers plan lessons for pupils using the curriculum plans that the school has in place. You have provided staff with important training so that they are able to use a digital platform to present lessons to pupils remotely. You have also made sure that all pupils have the necessary technology so that they can learn at home. Teachers plan the same lessons for pupils who are in school and those who are being educated remotely. There are up to three 'live' sessions per day that pupils are expected to attend. Teachers provide additional work to support these sessions.
- You wanted to know what parents thought about remote learning. Staff acted upon the feedback they received from parents. Teachers provide parents with

information about the lessons in advance. This allows parents to gather any resources that might be helpful. Parents also have time to think about the lessons they will be helping their children to complete. Teachers have started to record their live lessons so that pupils at home can access them at any time.

- Almost without exception, parents who expressed their views through the online survey, Parent View, spoke highly of the education that the school is providing during this national lockdown.
- Teachers have adapted the school's curriculum so that it can continue to be taught in the current circumstances. For example, they have made changes to some science experiments, so that they can be completed with resources that are more-readily available at home.
- Vulnerable pupils, and children of key workers, have all been offered a place in school during this national lockdown. Teachers check daily that pupils at home are taking part in remote education. They telephone parents if they are concerned about a pupil's participation in lessons. You and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) follow up these telephone calls, if you are still concerned. You continue to offer places in school to pupils who may be finding it difficult to learn at home.
- Reading is a priority at Southfield Primary School. Children who are still at the early stages of reading have regular phonics lessons and activities to undertake. Staff read to pupils daily. Pupils who need extra support to catch up get the help that they need. Reading, and the development of vocabulary, is at the centre of your plans to improve the curriculum.
- The SENCo has provided staff with training in identifying, and providing for, the needs of pupils with SEND. Teachers adapt their lessons so that pupils with SEND can continue to learn both in school and at home.
- All governors were new to their roles last term. The chief executive officer (CEO) of a multi-academy trust is supporting governors. It is too early for governors to be effectively challenging leaders and holding them fully to account. Nevertheless, they have established strong communication with school leaders. They ensure that they are fully informed about the education that is being provided for pupils at this time.
- You and your staff have received support and training in a variety of aspects of school life. This support has been especially helpful in developing your curriculum.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, three governors, the SENCo, three subject leaders, four teachers, the CEO and the school improvement

director from the multi-academy trust which is supporting the school to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also listened to two pupils reading to a member of staff. We spoke with four other pupils. We examined a sample of your curriculum plans and looked at some of the remote education that teachers are currently providing. We looked at the 39 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including the 30 free-text responses, and 20 staff questionnaires.

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

Yours sincerely

Di Mullan
Her Majesty's Inspector