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Mark Rose
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Dear Mr Rose

Additional monitoring inspection of Orchard Manor School

Following my inspection with Simon Rowe, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 9 and 10 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, most of Ofsted's monitoring inspections are being carried out remotely. This inspection, however, took place on site due to significant concerns about safeguarding and leadership and management.

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 was 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.

Safeguarding is effective.

Context

- Five new members have joined the board of governors since the section 5 inspection in January 2020. The school is due to join the Special Partnership Trust multi-academy trust on 1 April 2021.
- During the autumn term of 2020 and spring term of 2021, pupils in Year 6 and a mixed-age key stage 3 class had to learn remotely from home for a period due to COVID-19, approximately 10% of all pupils.
- Just under 40% of pupils are attending the school on a full-time basis. A further 30% attend on a part-time rota basis, typically for two days a week. Approximately 30% of pupils are not attending the school at the moment. All pupils have education, health and care plans.

Main findings

- At the previous inspection in January 2020, shortfalls in the monitoring of attendance placed pupils at significant risk. Leaders have now established a more robust system for monitoring whether pupils are in school or not. Attendance recording is now more accurate, although there is still work to be done to improve this further. Leaders and governors now have a shared understanding of the vital connection between the monitoring of attendance and the safeguarding of pupils.
- The wider culture of safeguarding has also improved since the previous inspection. The governing body has developed its ability to oversee the work of leaders and other staff to keep pupils safe. Record keeping by safeguarding leaders and staff in relation to safeguarding incidents is now better than it was.
- All pupils meet the government's definition of vulnerable pupils. School leaders have an appropriate system of risk assessment in place to determine which pupils will be onsite for five days a week and which will be part of the 'blended' approach, spending two days in school and the rest of the week at home. These arrangements are regularly reviewed to ensure that the school responds to changing circumstances and needs.
- At the time of the previous inspection, the quality of education was not consistent enough across the curriculum. Since then, the coherence of the curriculum has improved. The leaders of mathematics and English, for example, have now developed curriculum plans that cover the whole of the age range catered for by the school. Leaders are supporting middle leaders to play a bigger role in developing the curriculum, although this work is still relatively new.
- The school has a well-developed approach to the provision of education during the current period of partial school closure. Suitable adaptations have

been made to the curriculum, while remaining true to its core intent: developing the ability of pupils to live independently. This includes helping pupils to acquire the key knowledge they need to achieve their goals and to thrive.

- Leaders and teachers have developed a flexible approach to remote education that involves a variety of methods, such as 'live' lessons, pre-recorded lessons, paper resource packs or providing sensory resources for those pupils who need them. Teachers combine these methods creatively to ensure that, as far as possible, pupils' needs are met and they can continue to learn key knowledge when they are not physically in school.
- Reading remains a priority. The school has a clearly thought out approach to this and has put in additional support for those pupils who, for example, need to learn phonics remotely. Where appropriate, support is in place for those pupils who need to develop their communication and language prior to beginning their early reading.
- Leaders are paying close attention to pupils in Year 11 and post-16 students in their final year who are working towards qualifications. The majority of pupils in these year groups are receiving face-to-face teaching in recognition of their particular needs.
- Since January 2020, governors and leaders have been working to create a more cohesive staff community and some of that work is bearing fruit. Nonetheless, it remains the case that a minority of staff still have concerns about the way the school is led and how behaviour is managed.
- In the months following the previous inspection, the governing body underwent significant changes. These have brought additional capacity to the board of governors, particularly, but not only, in the area of safeguarding. These changes have made an important contribution to the improvement that can now be seen in the school.
- In their efforts to improve attendance monitoring, leaders have received significant support from educational welfare officers from the local authority, Devon. The school has also worked with the SENTient Trust, of which it is a member. This trust has conducted reviews and provided feedback to leaders to help them improve the work of the school. The school has also worked with the local teaching school alliance.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted on site due to concerns about safeguarding and leadership and management. We spoke to you and other senior leaders, representatives of those responsible for governance, administrative support staff and a representative of the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide

education to all pupils during a national lockdown, and improve safeguarding and the monitoring of attendance.

We also spoke to pupils and staff about remote learning and their experiences at the school. We reviewed documents provided by the school, including those relating to attendance, safeguarding and the pre-employment checks made on staff. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 20 free-text responses, and 133 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 Devon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Lee
Her Majesty's Inspector