

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



4 March 2021

Damian Booth
Headteacher
Seven Fields Primary School
Leigh Road
Penhill
Swindon
Wiltshire
SN2 5DE

Dear Mr Booth

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Seven Fields Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Julie Carrington, 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 May 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

- Since the last monitoring inspection, one senior member of staff has left the school, and there has been a restructure of the senior leadership team. The school became part of the River Learning Trust, a multi-academy trust, on 1 December 2019. A new chair of governors was appointed in September 2020. There are two new members of the local governing body.
- Across the autumn term 2020, approximately 30% of pupils experienced a period of remote education.
- At the time of this inspection, 80% of pupils are being educated at home. Approximately 20% of vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and 60% of pupils with education, health and care plans currently attend on site.
- Leaders are not dealing with any significant staff issues. Two members of support staff are absent due to COVID-19. These roles are being covered internally.

Main findings

- Since the last monitoring inspection in January 2020, you have been relentless in your drive and determination to improve the school. Many important changes have happened in a short space of time. The trust, local governing body, leaders and staff are working together well to secure improvement.
- You are adapting the curriculum to ensure that, where pupils still have gaps in their learning, they can catch up. You have adjusted the English and mathematics curriculums to enable pupils to revisit key concepts before they move on to new topics. Leaders are developing a curriculum that meets the specific needs of all pupils well. For example, there is a clear focus on the development of early language skills and physical development in the early years.
- You and your leadership team ensure that reading is a priority. Staff are working systematically to address gaps in pupils' early reading skills. Teachers are supported well in developing their subject knowledge of phonics. As a result, they check pupils' understanding more accurately. Regular support and a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics are enabling many pupils to catch up.
- Staff have received up-to-date training in delivering remote learning. This includes the use of breakout rooms during live lessons, which are used to provide tailored support for some pupils. Leaders are conscientiously monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. You have secured enough

electronic devices for pupils who need them and provide technical support to families to help them access online learning.

- You have ensured that vulnerable pupils and the children of key workers, who are learning on-site, receive the same education as pupils at home. The pastoral team are tenacious in ensuring that pupils access education in the current circumstances. You and your staff encourage pupils to attend school where necessary.
- Communication with families is regular and timely. You have systems in place that enable effective communication between home and school. Extra support for pupils has continued when they are behind in their learning, whether in school or at home.
- The provision for pupils with SEND has improved. The trust and school leaders have set up suitable systems to identify pupils' needs. Leaders' training is starting to have a positive impact on pupils' social, emotional and academic development. The special educational needs coordinator is beginning to check the remote learning of pupils with SEND more thoroughly. You and your staff communicate frequently with parents to enable them to support their children effectively. As a result, your checks show that pupils are engaging more and learning more.
- Leaders have recruited skilled new governors. This, alongside an experienced chair of governors, is enhancing leadership capacity. Governors are providing appropriate support and challenge to the school. They have developed a structured approach to monitoring the improvement of the school and are more persistent in holding all leaders to account.
- Trust leaders have provided risk assessments and policy guidance which allow school leaders to focus on the day-to-day running of the school. Trust staff are developing the skills of those new to leadership. Subject leaders in English and mathematics benefit from network meetings through the local hubs. In addition, teachers are receiving valuable training about subject curriculums.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, the director of primary education for the multi-academy trust, pupils, staff and governors to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We looked at the work of vulnerable pupils and pupils with SEND, as well as other pupils' work. We reviewed school documentation, minutes of governing body meetings and recent monitoring documents from the trust. We listened to pupils read. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 10 free-text responses, as well as 38 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of River Learning Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Swindon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Heather Barraclough
Her Majesty's Inspector