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Sue Finch
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Dear Ms Finch

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Westminster Community Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Jo Olsson, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 10 and 11 February, 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 improvement.

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 has received three successive judgements of requires improvement. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in September 2018.

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 recently implemented curriculums, especially for mathematics, are fully embedded in order to overcome the delays caused by the pandemic.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, two members of staff have left the school and one new teacher has taken up post. A new chair of governors was appointed in the autumn term 2020.
- During the autumn term 2020, approximately one fifth of pupils spent a short time working from home.
- At the time of this inspection, around one third of pupils were being educated at school. Approximately half of the pupils identified as being vulnerable were being educated at home. All pupils with education, health and care (EHC) plans were attending school.

Main findings

- You and other leaders have made many positive changes to the curriculum. There is now a more consistent approach to the teaching of phonics. More recently, an improved approach to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics has been introduced. The wider curriculum has been overhauled. Curriculum planning is clearly sequenced to allow pupils to build on their subject knowledge. While all staff have received training in how to deliver the new curriculums, the pandemic has prevented you from fully embedding these new approaches. This is particularly true for mathematics.
- You have ensured that all staff have been well trained in the systems to support home education. This means that no time was wasted moving to your remote education offer once the third national lockdown began. You and other staff regularly check pupils' engagement with home learning. You take supportive action when you notice that pupils are not making the most of the opportunities that are provided. In addition to the usual home learning, you and the staff plan a range of effective online activities that enable pupils to come together with their friends and teachers. This means that pupils know they are still very much part of the Westminster family.
- All pupils have the same opportunities to learn, whether they are at home or at school. Leaders have made every effort to deliver the existing curriculum despite the challenging circumstances. Teachers adapt activities within the usual curriculum so that pupils can continue their learning at home. For example, pupils have enjoyed their recent drumming lessons using pans from their own kitchens. However, at times, teachers' desire to teach the usual curriculum means that not enough thought is given to the introduction of more complex ideas when pupils start a new unit of work.

- Younger pupils, including those children in the early years, continue to receive effective phonics sessions led by knowledgeable staff. Teachers ensure that the books selected by pupils, in school or online, match their reading capabilities. Older pupils take part in weekly shared reading sessions that improve their comprehension and fluency. Pupils who spoke to us said that they enjoy reading. For example, they talked with enthusiasm about the myths and legends stories that they are currently reading. Those pupils who find reading difficult continue to receive the same level of support at home as they typically would in usual circumstances.
- You have made sure that those pupils identified as vulnerable are receiving the same education as others in the school. Staff carry out frequent checks on the welfare of vulnerable pupils and their families. Whenever required, teachers can access the expertise of relevant school staff, or external agencies, to effectively support the well-being and learning of these pupils.
- You and other leaders have taken effective action to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are able to access the full curriculum. This includes pupils with an EHC plan. The special educational needs coordinator supports staff well to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Specific resources have been delivered to homes to ensure that they continue to access their learning. This personal approach means that leaders and teachers are working successfully to ensure that pupils with SEND do not fall behind in their learning or lose their enthusiasm for school. Despite the pandemic, you continue to access the relevant external agencies to support pupils with SEND.
- Governors have stepped up their level of challenge to you and other leaders since the previous inspection. Your regular meetings with members of the governing body ensure that they are well informed about the work of the school. Governors have checked that all pupils are able to access home learning. This includes making sure electronic devices are available to those that need them. Governors' work to check on your well-being and the well-being of staff is appreciated by everyone.
- The local authority has supported the school well. It has brokered support from subject experts to help subject leaders implement new curriculums for reading, writing and mathematics. The local authority adviser has worked with you to implement these new approaches. More recently, this support has focused on ensuring that the remote education offer is meeting the needs of those pupils who are learning at home.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, pupils, staff, three members of the governing body, a representative of the local

authority and a small group of parents and carers to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We evaluated a range of documentation. This included curriculum planning and pupils' work. We also reviewed recorded teaching sessions. We considered the responses from 16 parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. We also took account of the 18 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff.

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

Yours sincerely

John Tomlinson
Her Majesty's Inspector