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Kate Fiddler
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Dear Miss Fiddler

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Shenley Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Fyfe Johnson, 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 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 two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in September 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 curriculum content in all subjects is carefully chosen so that pupils build on their prior learning.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, six members of staff have left the school. One new teacher has been appointed. Six new governors have joined the governing body.
- Across the autumn term 2020, about a fifth of pupils across year groups needed to work from home.
- Approximately 70% of the pupils identified by the school as being vulnerable were educated on site, as were 60% of pupils with education, health and care plans (EHC plans).

Main findings

- You and your staff are ensuring that all pupils have the necessary devices and resources to access the school's curriculum at home. You routinely reflect on your remote learning arrangements. Teachers are adapting learning so that all pupils can engage positively with their learning, whether at school or at home. Teachers are giving parents helpful guidance so that they can support their children's learning. The vast majority of parents who expressed their views are very positive about all that is being provided by the school.
- Pupils are continuing to learn in all of their subjects. Pupils in school and at home are completing appropriate work in English and mathematics that is in line with the school's curriculum plans. The techniques teachers use are enabling pupils to learn the intended curriculum.
- In subjects other than English and mathematics, your curriculum interests pupils and motivates them to complete their work. However, subject leaders have not fully considered the most important things that they want pupils to learn and the order in which to teach these. As a result, it is unclear how the school's curriculum builds on what pupils already know as they move from year to year.
- Since the previous inspection, you have continued to develop the ways in which staff help pupils learn to read. Teachers use a variety of ways to check the sounds pupils have learned. Teachers are making sure that pupils are building on their comprehension skills. Leaders have not considered how they will specifically teach pupils how to learn key vocabulary within their reading curriculum.

- Teachers use emails and live sessions to check on pupils' learning and well-being throughout the week. Teachers identify pupils who are struggling, and help them to catch up or correct their misconceptions. Pupils in school who fall behind are receiving focused support to help them to catch up.
- You are making sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are able to learn the intended curriculum. Teachers make regular checks on the learning of both those in school and at home. Teachers are tailoring pupils' work to individual needs. They are ensuring that EHC plans are reviewed within the appropriate timescales.
- Staff understand some of the barriers that might prevent vulnerable pupils from learning. You have worked well to remove many of these, so that pupils and their parents have the resources and guidance they need. This has had a positive impact on pupils' engagement with their learning.
- You are keeping governors well informed about the current arrangements for pupils' education. The governing body is working closely with local authority advisers. This is ensuring that school improvement is both on track and well focused. The local authority's school effectiveness adviser is providing helpful support and challenge to school leaders.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We held meetings with the headteacher, and senior leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, teachers and a group of pupils. We also spoke with six members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and the school effectiveness advisor to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We observed recorded lessons, sampled pupils' work and spoke with leaders responsible for pupils' well-being, including the family support worker. We also looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 54 free-text responses, and 20 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 Hertfordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Cindy Impey
Her Majesty's Inspector