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Emma Bolton
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Dear Mrs Bolton

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Queen's Park Academy

Following my remote inspection with Tessa Holledge, 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. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in June 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 previous inspection, there has been a change of headteacher. You took on the role in September 2019. You have had to reduce staffing levels. A number of staff at all levels have left or are due to leave the school soon.
- Leaders intend that the school will become part of a multi-academy trust. The necessary checks and preparations for this are ongoing.
- In the autumn term 2020 a very small number of pupils had to work from home.
- Currently, about a quarter of all pupils are being educated on site. This includes about one half of all vulnerable pupils and almost three quarters of pupils who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.

Main findings

- You have worked hard to provide a well-structured and personalised online programme. Your close monitoring of provision shows that all pupils are accessing and benefiting from the high-quality education on offer. Pupils also receive a paper pack weekly, with helpful information and extra resources.
- From previous surveys, you knew that some pupils found it hard to access online learning at home. Staff have worked well to provide additional devices for pupils. This has enabled more pupils to take part in online learning.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have done much to improve the school's curriculum. You have introduced coherent approaches to teaching reading, writing and mathematics. In these and other subjects, staff are clear about the key aspects that pupils need to learn, how these will be covered, and how teachers can check pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Against a backdrop of challenging circumstances, not least those resulting from COVID-19, you have all been determined to maintain the momentum of school improvement. The work that pupils access online is closely linked to what staff have originally planned. In remote lessons, staff stick to routines that pupils know well. Together with the individualised feedback which teachers provide, these techniques help pupils to learn more effectively.
- You continue to give reading a high focus. Pupils in school who are at an early stage of learning to read benefit from extra support and additional teaching sessions. Where appropriate, pupils have a daily pre-recorded lesson, and practise phonics skills through other activities. All pupils have a daily story time and most have two weekly reading lessons. Alongside the suitable books which you provide, your actions are helping pupils to become more confident readers.

- Leaders provide parents with clear guidance so that they can help their children to complete the work set. Teachers provide different approaches, including live lessons for all pupils. The feedback session at the end of each day is used to recap on the work covered and to check pupils' understanding.
- From your experiences last year, you knew that many vulnerable pupils missed out on education. These pupils lacked suitable places in which to work, appropriate technology or effective support. Far more pupils now attend lessons in school, while those remaining at home receive additional support. Pupils are more successful in their learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) being educated at home receive personalised plans and resource packs. These are updated weekly and are linked to the live lessons that pupils attend. These resources help pupils to learn well. Pupils with an EHC plan who are not in school have revised targets, agreed with parents. These help to ensure that pupils' most urgent needs are addressed.
- Trustees are very knowledgeable about the school. They bring a range of valuable experience and desirable skills to the role. Leaders provide trustees with records of weekly briefings and attendance reports, and have given them access to online learning materials. This helps trustees to monitor the quality of remote learning and the extent of pupils' engagement in it.
- The local authority and the regional English hub have provided valuable support. Both have shared their expertise, helping you to develop the school's provision for pupils with SEND and your approach to the teaching of reading.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, pupils, staff, and trustees to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We looked at school documents, particularly those to do with the curriculum, and sampled pupils' work, including that which pupils have completed online. We spoke to pupils being taught on site. We checked the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including 20 free-text responses, and 33 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 Bedford. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Randall
Her Majesty's Inspector