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Ben Radbourne
Acting Headteacher
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Dear Mr Radbourne

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Brackensdale Primary School

Following my remote inspection with John Lawson, 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 November 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 inspection, the principal has left the school. An interim acting headteacher left the school at the end of December 2020. A new acting headteacher and an acting deputy headteacher were appointed internally in January 2021. An interim executive board (IEB) has replaced the former governing body.
- During the autumn term 2020, pupils from all year groups were educated remotely at some point due to COVID-19. All year group 'bubbles', including children in the Nursery Year, were absent at least once. Pupils in Year 3 'bubbles' isolated twice.
- Currently, about half of all pupils are being educated at home. Approximately three quarters of the vulnerable pupils and just over three quarters of the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are attending school on site. The large majority of pupils with education, health and care plans are attending on site.
- A small proportion of staff are absent due to COVID-19.

Main findings

- Since the previous inspection, school leaders have started work to improve the curriculum. Middle and subject leaders have received appropriate training for their roles. The curriculum in some subjects, including mathematics, physical education, history and computing, is sequenced clearly. In other subjects, plans are not as well developed. Arrangements to check pupils' progress through the curriculum are in the early stages of development.
- Leaders have adapted the curriculum to meet the current challenges. The remote curriculum is the same as that taught in school. Pupils have lessons in mathematics, reading, writing and one other subject daily. Teachers record lessons for pupils who are learning remotely. They provide extra resources and activities for pupils if needed.
- Leaders promote reading across the school. Children in the Nursery and Reception Years, and pupils in Year 1 and Year 2, receive phonics lessons daily. Some pupils in key stage 2 have extra phonic sessions. Staff's expertise in teaching phonics has increased. The teaching of phonics is improving.
- Vulnerable pupils receive appropriate support. Leaders ensure that vulnerable pupils who are learning remotely have the resources they need. Staff telephone parents frequently to check on the well-being of families.
- Pupils with SEND, including those in the enhanced resource provision, continue to receive an appropriate education. When necessary, pupils have

bespoke programmes of learning to meet their needs. Staff visit some pupils at home to deliver equipment and offer support.

- Members of the IEB provide strong governance for the school. They check frequently that the school is continuing to improve and that pupils are safe. They are helping to build trusting relationships between parents and staff.
- A representative for the local authority gives assurance in relation to school procedures and policies. Two external national leaders for education provide staff with advice and guidance to improve their practice.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, the acting deputy headteacher, leaders of the provision for pupils with SEND, subject leaders, members of the IEB and a local authority officer, to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We examined some of the school's curriculum plans and viewed samples of learning that is provided remotely. We listened to pupils reading to an adult. We considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 72 free-text responses, and 51 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 Derby. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Stephanie Innes-Taylor
Her Majesty's Inspector