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Julie Jenkin
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Dear Mrs Jenkin

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Mabe Community Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Nathan Kemp, 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 have serious weaknesses.

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 have serious weaknesses at its previous section 5 inspection. 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

- At the time of the last inspection, the school was part of The Learning Academy Trust. In September 2019, they formed the Kernow Learning Trust with the Atlantic Centre of Excellence Trust. You joined the school, as headteacher, in January 2020. An interim advisory board is in post to fulfil local governance responsibilities.
- Across the autumn term 2020, approximately 20% of pupils spent time learning remotely. No classes or 'bubbles' had to isolate because of COVID-19.
- This term, approximately 72% of pupils are learning remotely. Around 50% of pupils with education, health and care plans and 45% of vulnerable pupils are learning from home.
- At the time of this inspection, there are significant changes to your usual staff. Temporary leaders are in place for key stage 1 and key stage 2. No staff are absent due to COVID-19.

Main findings

- You have taken appropriate action to make sure that pupils continue to receive an education throughout the current circumstances. You introduced a new online learning system in January 2021. As a result, pupils are benefiting from an improved multi-media approach to education, whether they are learning at home or in school.
- When schools partially closed on 23 March 2020, curriculum leaders had started to develop subject plans to make sure that pupils are taught the most important knowledge in the right order. However, the timescales that you had set for the full review of subjects has been delayed by COVID-19 restrictions. Plans for reading, writing and mathematics are further ahead than other subjects, such as geography and science.
- After the last inspection, leaders rightly focused on developing an effective curriculum for reading. This is now in place. Pupils at home are learning the same things as the pupils in school. Teachers in the early years and key stage 1 have made sure that pupils continue with their phonics lessons every day. You have made sure that books match the letters and sounds that they know.
- Pupils in key stage 2, who are still at the early stages of learning to read, continue to benefit from extra phonics lessons. Teachers use carefully selected books to read stories with pupils during daily reading time. Leaders have ensured that pupils are studying appropriately challenging books. For example, pupils in Year 6 read Shakespeare's 'Macbeth' to help prepare them for their studies in secondary school.

- Leaders have encouraged vulnerable pupils and children of key workers to attend school during the current restrictions. Vulnerable pupils who need support to catch up have valuable, additional reading sessions. You have provided devices, such as laptops, for some pupils who are learning from home. As a result, all pupils can access education in the current circumstances.
- Some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) continue to benefit from a blend of learning in school and at home. You have provided effective training for teaching assistants in how to provide extra support for pupils, whether they are learning at home or in school. The special educational needs coordinator has made sure that pupils who are learning at home have the same specialist equipment they use when they are in school. Consequently, pupils are supported effectively to access the curriculum at this time.
- Trustees understand that the pandemic has caused delays to your school improvement work. Nevertheless, they are holding you to account effectively for the education you provide, whether remotely or on site. The interim advisory board members continue to meet remotely and are checking on curriculum developments. However, these checks are in their infancy and it is too soon to measure the impact of members' actions.
- Leaders from the Kernow Learning Trust, including other headteachers in your 'hub', are providing suitable, collaborative support. This support is providing you with an increasingly accurate evaluation of the school, including current strengths and suitable next steps.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, the Kernow Learning Trust chief executive officer and chair of trustees, staff, pupils and two representatives of the interim advisory board to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We reviewed school documentation, such as curriculum plans, support plans for pupils with SEND, external audit reports and minutes from the interim advisory board meetings. We looked at 39 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 35 free-text responses, and 19 staff questionnaires.

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

Yours sincerely

Sue Costello
Her Majesty's Inspector