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Paul Brockwell
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Dear Mr Brockwell

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Co-op Academy Leeds

Following my remote inspection with Tim Jenner, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 2 March 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.

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 January 2019.

Having considered all the evidence and taking into account the impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus) 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 every subject has an ambitious and challenging curriculum that allows pupils to build their knowledge and skills sequentially.

Context

- Trustees have appointed several new senior leaders, including the principal and vice principal, since the previous section 5 inspection. Some new faculty and subject leaders have also been employed. Three new governors have joined the governing body.
- The school provides specialist provision, in the sixth form, for students who are new to the country. This provision supports students who are learning English as an additional language. Most students complete their study at the end of Year 12.
- Across the autumn term 2020, about half of all pupils needed to isolate at home at some point due to COVID-19. This mainly affected pupils in Years 8, 9, 10 and 11.
- Currently, most pupils are being educated at home. About half of vulnerable pupils and a third of pupils with an education, health and care plan are attending school on site.

Main findings

- Leaders' actions have ensured that all pupils can access education in the current circumstances. The views of staff, pupils, parents and carers have been used well to develop this provision.
- Leaders have focused on improving the school since its previous inspection. They have not let the challenges posed by the pandemic stop ongoing developments. You are determined to raise aspirations. Leaders have high expectations of pupils and staff.
- Leaders have broadened the range of subjects taught to Year 9 pupils. For example, they have removed options subjects and allowed pupils to study all subjects.
- In some subjects, for example physical education (PE), leaders have planned an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum for pupils in all years. Not all subject curriculums identify the important knowledge that pupils need to learn, and in what order. Some subject leaders have prioritised curriculum planning for specific year groups. For example, leaders of science are improving the curriculum content and sequence of learning for pupils in Years 10 and 11.

- Leaders have improved the remote education offer since the previous lockdown. Leaders and teachers provide parents with support so that parents can encourage and guide pupils more. As a result, pupils' engagement has improved this term. Teachers use a mixture of paper and online resources as well as live and recorded online lessons, to ensure that pupils continue to learn.
- Leaders make sure that pupils attending school on site, including vulnerable pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), learn the same curriculum as their peers at home. These pupils follow a timetable of lessons that includes a daily PE lesson. Teachers deliver lessons in specialist subject rooms so that these pupils can take part in practical work as part of their learning. Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND who are learning at home have regular support from their key workers.
- Leaders ensure that pupils who struggle to read get the support that they need. Pupils who learn at home and on site build on their phonics knowledge. This helps them to improve their reading and writing. Leaders give pupils whose first language is not English support to become more fluent when speaking, reading and writing English.
- You continue to make sure that pupils in Years 11 to 13 access their examination subjects. Teachers ensure that these pupils are well prepared for their next stages of education or training.
- Trustees and members of the governing body are ambitious for the school and the contribution it can make to the local community. They ensure that the 'ways of being Co-op' and the Co-op values underpin their work. They challenge and support leaders effectively to improve the school's curriculum.
- Trust officers provide support, training and coaching for school leaders. The impact of these is seen in the improved leadership capacity and better curriculum planning in some subjects. The trust has supported the school in managing the challenges posed by COVID-19, for example by providing electronic devices for some pupils.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, senior leaders, subject leaders and other school leaders. We met with multi-academy trust officers and representatives of those responsible for governance to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also reviewed examples of recorded remote lessons and observed pupils in their reading lesson. We looked at information about the curriculum. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 74 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of The Co-operative Academies Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Leeds. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Chris Davies
Her Majesty's Inspector