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Jessica Humphrey  
Executive Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Humphrey

### **Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Kings Ash Academy**

Following my remote inspection with Heather Barraclough, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 25 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.

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 March 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.**

## Context

- There have been no significant changes to staffing or leadership since the previous inspection. The school remains part of Bay Education Trust.
- In the autumn term 2020, there were no confirmed cases of COVID-19. However, approximately 40% of pupils were educated remotely at some time. The average period of absence for these pupils was 2 to 3 days. No 'bubbles', classes or year groups were closed.
- At the time of this inspection, approximately 40% of pupils were attending school. This includes 63% of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and 68% of vulnerable pupils. In addition, approximately 60% of pupils with an education, health and care plan were in school.
- Two members of staff were shielding at home at the time of this inspection. However, they continue to contribute to the school's offer of on-site and remote education.

## Main findings

- Since the beginning of the third national lockdown, the proportion of vulnerable pupils and pupils with SEND attending school has increased. With the support of the multi-academy trust, you have worked hard to ensure that as many pupils as possible access education in the current circumstances. You have provided devices, internet data and paper copies of work for families that need them. As a result, most pupils regularly access and complete activities that staff provide.
- You chose methods of remote education which parents, pupils and staff knew and understood. This made it easy to get off to a quick start when schools closed to all pupils. You remain adamant that despite national restrictions, it is very much 'business as usual'. While it is impossible to teach everything you normally would, such as team sports in physical education, you continue to offer the school's normal curriculum.
- You have ensured that all pupils have access to a rich and varied curriculum experience that links to the school's 'Big ideas'. Staff provide daily English and mathematics lessons for all pupils. Pupils also learn science and in the foundation subjects, such as history, at different points of the week. In subjects such as music and French, pupils continue to receive specialist teaching. Staff go the extra mile to make sure pupils educated remotely do not miss out, delivering items such as reading books, sculpting clay and musical instruments to pupils' homes.
- Phonics and reading rightly remain a top priority for the school. You provide daily opportunities for pupils to develop their phonics knowledge, including in the early years. Teachers provide activities which match pupils' knowledge.

Staff provide support for pupils who need extra help to keep on track. Your analysis of assessment information suggests to you that pupils' knowledge is close to where it would be normally at this time of year.

- Teachers provide pupils with daily opportunities to read and listen to an adult read. This starts in the early years, where children listen to and recite nursery rhymes. You have carefully selected high-quality texts with increasing complexity, so pupils of all ages can access rich language and vocabulary. Fluent readers access books matched to their reading ability and are regularly assessed to test their understanding and readiness to tackle more complex texts.
- You continue to support pupils with SEND, whether they are at home or in school. Teachers provide activities that help pupils make progress against their individual targets. You keep in touch with families, so parents know how to support their children. Pupils continue to access specialist support, including from the educational psychologist and speech and language specialists. As a result, pupils with SEND engage well with education.
- The trust board supports you well. It keeps a watchful eye on how well pupils engage with remote education. An external consultant carries out visits to the school. Such visits are used by the trust board to assure themselves that the school continues to improve, even in the current circumstances.
- You access useful support from the local teaching school. Your staff have benefited from teachers working together across a range of schools to compare their judgements of pupils' work. This has helped your staff make accurate assessments of what pupils know, can do and understand. You have also accessed reading and mathematics support.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, curriculum leaders, pupils, a representative of the local teaching school and the chief executive officer of Bay Education Trust to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We listened to pupils read. We also looked at a sample of curriculum plans, activities provided for pupils and a sample of pupils' work. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 13 free-text responses, and 54 staff questionnaires.

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

Yours sincerely

Nathan Kemp  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**