

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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David Taylor
Executive Headteacher
School Street
Dinnington
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S25 2RE

Dear Mr Taylor

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Dinnington Community Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Andrea Batley, 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 special measures.

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 April 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 pupils who are struggling to learn to read, including those in key stage 2, are catching up as quickly as possible.

Context

- There have been significant leadership and staffing changes since the last inspection. The executive headteacher, head of school and two assistant headteachers have been appointed in the last year. There have also been changes in governance, including a new chief executive officer.
- A small number of pupils worked remotely at some point during the autumn term for short periods of time.
- At the time of this inspection, about a third of pupils were being educated on site. Most of the vulnerable pupils were attending school on site. About half of the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) were attending school on site.

Main findings

- Leaders are highly focused on the curriculum and the importance of having reading at its core. This is supporting leaders in addressing the gaps in pupils' learning. Pupils are receiving remote teaching in a broad range of subjects. Some teaching is in the form of pre-recorded videos and follow-up work. There are also live sessions for assemblies, story time and feedback.
- Leaders have identified pupils who may be vulnerable and have prioritised their attendance on site. In school, these pupils receive the same curriculum offer as their peers working remotely. They also benefit from face-to-face support from teaching assistants and access to classroom resources.
- A team of staff work with pupils with SEND, whether they are working remotely or are in school. Teachers are supported by the special educational needs coordinator to plan lessons to meet individual pupils' learning needs. Information is shared between staff and parents to make sure that pupils' needs are being addressed.
- There has been a focus on the teaching of phonics since the last inspection. Training for all staff, including those in key stage 2, has been a priority. Pupils, either on site or working remotely, are receiving their usual phonics curriculum. Assessment is being used to identify precise gaps in pupils' learning so that additional support can be provided. Pupils who are struggling to learn to read are steadily making progress. However, this support needs to make sure that pupils quickly catch up with the expected pace of the phonics curriculum.

- The school's curriculum had been under review following the previous inspection. Leaders have adapted the curriculum for the current circumstances. They have prioritised the knowledge which is essential for pupils to understand and remember. They have placed the emphasis on knowledge which is transferable to later learning. Leaders have identified vocabulary as a particular priority. Leaders are aware of limitations of delivering the curriculum remotely. They recognise the difficulty in being able to find out what pupils have understood and remembered. They are also aware of the need to address the gaps in pupils' learning on their full-time return to school. Some units of work, involving the use of specialist resources, have been delayed until all pupils return to school.
- Trustees have taken action to secure a leadership team with the expertise needed to improve the school. Trust support has been an important factor in developing leadership and providing training for all staff. Attention to school improvement has remained a focus throughout the pandemic. The attention to curriculum is resulting in careful consideration about what children need to learn, what to prioritise, and how to check how well it is understood.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, the head of school, other senior leaders, the multi-academy trust chief executive officer, representatives from the board of trustees and a sample of staff to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also listened to pupils read and watched clips of a sample of recorded remote lessons. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including six 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 White Woods Primary Academy Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Rotherham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kirsty Godfrey
Her Majesty's Inspector