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Rosanna O'Reilly
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Dear Miss O'Reilly

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Willowdown Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Susan Aykin, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 4 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.

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 has received two successive judgements of requires improvement. 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.

Leaders and those responsible for governance should take further action to:

- improve the curriculum for French to ensure pupils' knowledge is developed effectively over time.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, four teachers have joined the school, including the early years leader and the English leader. A new chair of governors took up post in September 2019.
- During the autumn term 2020, approximately 55% of pupils had to be educated remotely at some point. Four 'bubbles' had to close.
- At the time of this inspection, around 45% of pupils were being educated on site. All of your vulnerable pupils, including those with an education, health and care plan, were attending on site.

Main findings

- Since March 2020, leaders have improved the quality of remote education. Curriculum leaders have adapted the usual curriculum to make sure pupils are able to continue with their learning whether at home or in school. However, you have prioritised reading, writing and mathematics.
- Following the previous inspection, you acted quickly, and with determination, to overhaul the curriculum. New leaders are using their strong subject knowledge to make sure that pupils are taught the most important learning in the right order, from Nursery to Year 6. The curriculums for some subjects, such as mathematics and geography, are organised to help pupils to know more and remember more. However, the way teachers organise the curriculum and assess pupils' knowledge in French is not as effective.
- Leaders have rightly focused on developing an effective curriculum for reading. Daily phonics lessons take place for pupils at school and those being educated remotely. Books for pupils in Reception, and Years 1 and 2, match the letters and sounds that they know. Pupils are reading more fluently as a result. In key stage 2, the new reading curriculum is helping pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding of a range of texts. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about their enjoyment of reading.
- Leaders have ensured that there is a consistent approach to the teaching of writing across the school. Teachers are making detailed checks on pupils' knowledge so they can identify where pupils have missed out on learning. Teachers have found that some pupils need more help to apply their knowledge of spelling patterns and rules to their writing. You have introduced extra sessions to help pupils catch up quickly.

- You are successfully promoting the well-being of vulnerable pupils. You have an experienced inclusion team who supports vulnerable pupils and the children of key workers to attend school effectively. Parents appreciate the regular contact from staff and the additional support they provide, particularly to help pupils improve their reading.
- The special educational needs coordinator checks to ensure that remote education meets pupils' needs. Leaders have made sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who are learning at home have the specialist equipment they need. Teaching assistants support lessons in school effectively and provide more help to pupils as needed. Consequently, all pupils with SEND have access to learning that meets their needs.
- Governors and trustees have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors share your high expectations for pupils' education and well-being. The chief executive officer, and governors from other schools in the trust, work with the local governing body to provide strong support and challenge.
- The trust has played an important role to make sure pupils can access education in the current circumstances. As far as possible, trust leaders have also maintained their actions to address remaining weaknesses in the curriculum. The trust provides valuable training for staff. Leaders have also drawn on strong support from a range of external partners. This is helping to improve the quality of education in many subjects, including English and mathematics.

Evidence

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

We also looked at school documentation and samples of pupils' work. We observed three pupils reading. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including eight free-text responses, and 35 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Clevedon Learning multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Somerset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sue Costello
Her Majesty's Inspector