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Louise Newman
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Dear Dr Newman

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Hartshill School

Following my remote inspection with Ian Tustian, 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.

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 October 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 pupils who need help to improve their reading get the support they need quickly when they return to school.

Context

- Since the last inspection, the principal has left. You and an assistant principal were appointed in September 2020. Three new directors have been appointed to the trust board.
- The school has been affected by outbreaks of COVID-19 at various points. During the autumn term, all pupils had to spend some time working at home.
- At the time of this inspection, around 90% of pupils were learning at home. Just under 70% of pupils who are vulnerable and around 50% of pupils with education, health and care plans were being educated on site.

Main findings

- Since January 2021, you have chosen to deliver the curriculum through 'live' online lessons. Leaders systematically identify barriers to pupils accessing learning and work quickly and effectively to overcome these barriers. For example, leaders ensure that all pupils have the devices they need to participate in online lessons. In addition, leaders have introduced a 'resource bus'. The resource bus delivers items such as stationary, food parcels and sanitary products to families who need them.
- Adults keep in regular contact with pupils and their families. They routinely encourage and praise pupils for their participation in online lessons. As a result, more and more pupils are consistently engaging with remote learning. Staff are quick to respond if they have not had contact from a pupil when expected, for example if they have not joined a remote lesson.
- As a member of the Midland Academies Trust, you are following the trust's five-year curriculum. Before the pandemic, leaders had put in place the content they want pupils to learn in each subject. During the pandemic, the trust's subject leads have supported school leaders to make sensible changes to some elements of the curriculum. In personal, social, health and economic education, for instance, teachers have emphasised learning on mental health and well-being. Leaders have trained teachers well in how to deliver the curriculum at this time. As a result, staff are confident in teaching remotely.
- Vulnerable pupils are encouraged to attend school. When attending school, 'progress coaches' provide useful help to pupils during online lessons. Appropriate support is in place for vulnerable pupils who are learning at home. Leaders ensure that these pupils have the equipment they need. If pupils have problems in accessing online learning, further help is readily

available from the school's family engagement officer. As a result, most vulnerable pupils at home and in school keep pace with their learning.

- Leaders understand the importance of providing support to pupils in Year 11 at this time. They have continued to give these pupils helpful information about their next steps. All pupils in Year 11 have had a careers interview. Leaders have clear plans to provide further guidance to pupils. For example, pupils who are considering studying A-level mathematics will have the option of attending extra mathematics lessons to help prepare them for their post-16 education.
- Leaders are taking action to make reading a priority. They have checks in place for identifying pupils' starting points in reading. Consequently, leaders know which pupils need extra help. Pupils learning in school have the support they need. However, this is not the case for pupils learning at home. As a result, these pupils are falling further behind with their reading.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving. Stable leadership of this area is now in place. Leaders have ensured that pupils with the most complex needs have received the support they need during the current circumstances.
- Members of the Raising Achievement Board, who are responsible for holding leaders to account for the quality of education, have a strong understanding of their role. They challenge school leaders about the quality of remote education. This challenge has resulted in improvements to aspects of the school's remote learning offer. For example, governors questioned leaders about levels of pupil engagement in remote lessons. As a result, leaders took swift action to improve systems for checking pupils' engagement.
- The trust has provided effective support in the current circumstances. Trust leaders provide support on practical matters, such as checking leaders' plans for the reopening of the school. This practical support has sharpened leaders focus on delivering education.

Evidence

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

A range of documents were scrutinised, including examples of curriculum plans. We also viewed a sample of work that is being provided remotely. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 42 free-text responses, and 64 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of directors and the chief executive officer of the Midland Academies Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Warwickshire local authority. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Stevens
Her Majesty's Inspector