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Elisa Entwistle
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Dear Mrs Entwistle

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Gloucester and Forest Alternative Provision

Following my remote inspection 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 February 2018.

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:

- ensure that curriculum planning is coherent in all subjects
- use assessment effectively to address the gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Context

- Since the last inspection, you have restructured leadership. You have appointed a head of curriculum development, who joined the school in September 2020.
- Across the autumn term 2020, no pupils were educated remotely.
- At the time of this inspection, approximately a fifth of pupils were being educated at home. Approximately four fifths of vulnerable pupils and two thirds of pupils with an education, health and care plan were attending onsite.

Main findings

- You, and your staff, work hard to provide pupils with an education in the current circumstances. You secure laptops and internet access for pupils who need them. At the same time, you have kept a determined focus on the areas for improvement from your previous inspection. For example, you prioritise reading. Staff are well trained in the teaching of phonics. They teach early readers daily, with increasing effectiveness. Teaching meets the needs of pupils increasingly well, whether they are learning at school or remotely.
- You have created a strong team ethos among staff. They appreciate the way you look after their well-being. All staff are committed to promoting and looking after the welfare of pupils. Consequently, staff work together with enthusiasm to educate and care for pupils.
- You have skilfully built on the improvements you made to the quality of education before the pandemic. The new head of curriculum has sensibly worked on planning and the use of assessment. This is improving teaching, particularly in English, mathematics and science. However, teaching in other subjects, particularly history and geography, is not as strong. Teachers do not use assessment to identify key gaps in pupils' knowledge well enough. As a result, the school's curriculum is not effective in addressing gaps in pupils' knowledge in some subjects.
- Your approach to remote learning is well considered. Pupils access tailored packages of learning that support their specific needs. Staff provide work packs for pupils who find working online challenging. Pupils access the same learning whether in school or working at home. This allows pupils to return to school seamlessly following any periods of learning at home.

- All pupils who attend the school are vulnerable. Leaders and staff know the pupils and their needs exceptionally well. Through regular contact with families, you have strengthened relationships between school and home. Parents appreciate the support you give to their children.
- You have agreed with the local authority to keep current Year 11 pupils on roll. As a result, you are ensuring a consistent education for these pupils until they finish school. You expect them to complete the content of their courses by the end of the school year.
- Leaders' plans to provide for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are strong. Bespoke packages of support are designed and delivered for all pupils. Staff consider carefully how to adapt their delivery of remote learning for individual pupils.
- Governance is effective. The management committee consists of appropriately skilled individuals. Strong procedures allow committee members to hold leaders stringently to account. They check what leaders say by meeting with other staff and visiting the school. Through careful challenge, they ensure your plans to provide education are continually reviewed and improved.
- You work closely and openly with the local authority. They are now a key partner in bringing about improvement at the school. For example, the local authority has provided useful training in the teaching of phonics. You have used external scrutiny from an independent consultant to strengthen the curriculum. This has supported you and other leaders to focus sharply on the right things to bring about improvement at the school.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. I spoke to you, other senior leaders, staff, members of the management committee and a representative from the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

I also scrutinised examples of your remote education offer, pupils' work, information available to parents on the school's website and the minutes of management committee meetings. There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, so I reviewed evidence of feedback from parents received by the school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the management committee, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Gloucestershire County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Barnes
Her Majesty's Inspector