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Samirah Roberts
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Dear Miss Roberts

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Rugby Free Secondary School

Following my remote inspection with Alun Williams, 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 have serious weaknesses.

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 have serious weaknesses at its previous section 5 inspection. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in May 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 leaders' plans to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are consistently implemented by all staff.

Context

- Since the last inspection, an assistant headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator have left the school. Two new assistant headteachers have been appointed. Curriculum leaders in mathematics and science have joined the school. One new trustee has been appointed to the trust board.
- During the autumn term 2020, pupils in all year groups spent some time learning at home. Pupils in Year 10 were most affected as they had to isolate on three separate occasions.
- At the time of this inspection, around 90% of pupils were being educated at home. Just under 50% of pupils who are vulnerable and around 40% of pupils with education, health and care plans are being educated on site.

Main findings

- Leaders have thought carefully about how they want the curriculum to be delivered remotely. They have trained staff in how to do this. As a result, teachers are becoming more skilled and confident in their delivery of the remote curriculum. You and other leaders make regular checks to ensure that leaders' expectations for remote learning are being met.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have remained focused on improving the school's curriculum. Curriculum leaders have reviewed the content of their subjects to make sure that pupils learn the most important knowledge in the right order. These plans are further ahead in some subjects than in others.
- During the current national restrictions, curriculum leaders have made sensible adaptations to the curriculum plans. They have made these changes so that pupils who are learning at home can continue to learn a broad range of subjects. For example, in music, pupils are using body percussion instead of instruments to learn about African drumming.
- Vulnerable pupils both in school and those accessing education at home are learning their usual subjects. Leaders have ensured that these pupils have access to both appropriate electronic devices and practical equipment. For example, pupils who are studying art in Years 9 to 11 have been provided with practical resources. You have rightly ensured that pupils who are learning in school benefit from face-to-face teaching and regular opportunities to take part in physical activity.

- Leaders have effective plans in place for supporting pupils who need help to read well. Adults are continuing to provide the right support to these pupils in school and remotely.
- Leaders have maintained their focus on providing careers advice and guidance to pupils in Year 11. All pupils in Year 11 have received an independent careers interview. In addition, teachers are providing regular advice to pupils on how to revise effectively. Pupils value this support.
- You recognise that until recently the support for pupils with SEND has been weak. Leaders now have a clear plan for supporting pupils with SEND. As a result, teachers and teaching assistants have a better understanding of how to support these pupils. For example, when working remotely, pupils with SEND can access 'breakout rooms' where adults are available to provide help. However, there is still more to do to ensure that the needs of pupils are consistently met.
- Trustees have a strong understanding of their roles and responsibilities. At the start of the latest national restrictions, they took swift action to ensure that there was a clear strategy for providing education remotely.
- Members of the Sustainable Improvement Board, who are responsible for governance, hold leaders to account for the quality of education. They have gathered the views of parents and pupils about remote education. As a result, those responsible for governance have an accurate view of the quality of remote education. They have used this information to challenge school leaders about aspects of the remote learning offer. This challenge has led to improvements in pupils' remote education. For example, governors' questions have led school leaders to increase the opportunities for pupils to interact with their teachers when working remotely.
- Two external consultants support the school. This work has helped curriculum leaders in science, mathematics and humanities to develop their curriculum plans.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. Inspectors spoke to you, other senior leaders, curriculum leaders and the chief executive officer (CEO) of the Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow (LT2) multi-academy trust. In addition, inspectors spoke to pupils, representatives of those responsible for governance and two consultants who are providing support to the school to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

A range of documents were scrutinised, including examples of the school's curriculum plans. Inspectors also viewed some work that is being provided remotely.

Inspectors looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 117 free-text responses, and 74 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the CEO of the LT2 multi-academy 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