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Dear Miss Gobbi

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Oasis Academy Oldham

Following my remote inspection with David Selby, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 24 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 November 2018.

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 staff identify and support those pupils who are most behind with their reading, including by providing phonics sessions when necessary, so that pupils catch up quickly
- implement and embed the new curriculum plans in Years 9, 10 and 11
- develop teachers' knowledge and understanding of how to adapt the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Context

- Since the last inspection, there has been a substantial number of changes to the school's leadership team and the body of teaching staff.
- Four new senior leaders have been appointed, including a new deputy principal. Three senior leaders have left the school. Eight subject leaders have been appointed, including new leaders in English, mathematics and science. The trust has appointed a new regional academies director.
- During the autumn term 2020, approximately four fifths of pupils worked from home for a short period due to self-isolation. Pupils in Year 9 had more periods of self-isolation compared to pupils in other year groups.
- At the time of this inspection, all but a small proportion of pupils were being educated remotely at home. Almost one third of pupils with an education, health and care plan, and almost one sixth of vulnerable pupils, were attending on site.

Main findings

- You and other leaders have ensured that staff are appropriately trained to deliver remote education. You have also made sure that all pupils have access to a digital device. This meant that once the third lockdown began, you were well placed to move to the online remote curriculum offer. Accordingly, pupils have continued to receive an education in the current circumstances, whether they are being taught in school or at home.
- Over the past 20 months, you have successfully evaluated the purpose of the school's curriculum. You and other senior leaders recognised that the curriculum that was in place lacked breadth and depth and did not help pupils to be as successful as possible in their future education, employment or

training. Consequently, you took the necessary action to rethink the purpose of the curriculum in its entirety.

- Following your review of the purpose of the curriculum, you and academy leaders took the necessary action to strengthen the leadership of subjects. You appointed several new subject leaders with the appropriate knowledge and skills to develop and enhance the school's curriculum plans. The appointment of these leaders began the journey to strengthen pupils' learning.
- During the summer term 2020, you provided subject leaders and teachers with time to identify the most important knowledge that pupils need to know and remember. Teachers have made steady progress in planning the order in which this knowledge is delivered. However, subject leaders' plans are not all at the same stage of roll out.
- At this point in time, you have successfully implemented the new curriculum plans in Years 7 and 8. However, pupils in Years 10 and 11 are studying the previous curriculum, albeit in an adapted form. Pupils in Year 9 are carrying out project work in preparation for their GCSE subjects. Although subject leaders have prepared appropriate new subject plans for these year groups, leaders have not implemented them due to the impact of the pandemic.
- Leaders have a process in place to identify pupils who are behind in their reading. However, weaknesses in pupils' phonics knowledge have not been precisely identified during the current restrictions. Usually, trained staff deliver sessions to support weak readers. Due to the pandemic, leaders have temporarily paused some of the curriculum sessions that they use to help develop reading. Consequently, pupils have not received all the support that they would ordinarily access.
- Specialist pastoral staff make regular contact with all vulnerable pupils who are learning at home. Staff act swiftly if they have any concerns. For example, the 'Hub Council' volunteers have challenged older pupils who are not engaging with their education. The vulnerable pupils who we spoke to during the inspection told us that they appreciate the opportunities available for them to learn in school.
- Teachers have appropriately adjusted the timing and style of assessments for pupils in Year 11. This is so that these pupils have extra time to acquire the essential knowledge for their next stage in education. Pupils in Year 11 regularly attend an extra lesson at the end of each day to enable them to catch up quickly.
- You and trust leaders have strengthened and reorganised the leadership of SEND. Leaders are now more effective at sharing specialist resources and knowledge. For example, the new special educational needs coordinator has

embarked on a plan to train teaching and support staff. However, leaders are at an early stage in ensuring that all teachers have the knowledge and confidence to support the learning of pupils with SEND.

- Representatives from the Oasis Community Learning (OCL) multi-academy trust are knowledgeable about the specific challenges faced by you and your staff. They have thorough systems in place to check the quality of the education on offer. Trust leaders hold you and other staff to account effectively.
- A national leader of education continues to provide support and advice to you and others at the school. As a result, leadership is strengthening. This external viewpoint helps you to identify the next steps to improve the school.
- OCL national lead practitioners provide training for subject leaders. This is having a positive impact on developing subject leaders' expertise.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, the multi-academy trust chief executive officer and the national academies director for OCL multi-academy trust. We also spoke with groups of pupils, subject leaders and members of the teaching staff. We met with a national leader of education from a local teaching school. This was to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also looked at a range of documentation, including a small selection of curriculum plans, examples of remote education and minutes of the OCL board. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 54 free-text responses, and 120 staff questionnaires.

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

Yours sincerely

Alyson Middlemass
Her Majesty's Inspector