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Richard Burgas
Principal
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Dear Mr Burgas

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Oak Academy

Following my remote inspection with Paul Williams, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 2 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 November 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:

- develop the reading programme and regain the momentum built prior to the most recent national lockdown.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, the leadership team has been reorganised and a new special educational needs coordinator has joined the school. The school's governance is currently changing from an academy priority support committee to a local governing board.
- During the autumn term of 2020, pupils in one Year 11 'bubble' had to be educated remotely for a time.
- At the time of this inspection, 12% of pupils were being educated on site. Approximately 50% of vulnerable pupils and pupils with education, health and care plans were attending on site.

Main findings

- Leaders and those responsible for governance have made changes to strengthen leadership. Leaders are securing improvement, particularly in the curriculum and the personal development and careers programme.
- Leaders have begun to develop a reading programme to encourage pupils to read more widely and to develop fluency in reading. Prior to the third national lockdown, leaders had allocated staffing and resources to support pupils who need additional help. However, recent interruptions due to COVID-19 have slowed momentum and limited the impact of this work.
- Leaders have taken the right actions to improve links between home and school, especially for those pupils who are vulnerable. The family liaison officers have developed strong links with parents and families. This is a strength of the school. One parent captured the sentiments of many in their comment that, 'The communication from the school is second to none.'
- Leaders worked productively with the multi-academy trust to implement appropriate remote education. Leaders have made sensible adjustments to the curriculum during the period of COVID-19, for example, by moving practical work in science for Year 11 pupils. Pupils told us they value the way that staff keep in touch with them, both during and outside of lessons.
- Year 11 pupils are studying their usual examination courses. Teachers routinely check how often pupils join in with lessons. As a result, pupils' attendance and engagement has improved. Pupils in Year 11 are benefiting from the school's careers programme, which provides them with clear guidance about their next steps.

- Pupils who are vulnerable and children of key workers are increasingly attending on site. Leaders have invited pupils into school who find it difficult to learn at home. Pupils who attend on site are benefiting from a wide range of activities, including physical education. The school has effective systems to check the attendance, welfare and engagement of vulnerable pupils who are learning remotely.
- Leaders are ambitious for pupils with SEND. The school SEND team has been supported by the trust director of special education, which has led to improved identification of pupils' needs. Teachers are well equipped with strategies to support pupils with SEND. Most parents of pupils with SEND who responded to the parent survey said the school supported their child well.
- Pupils with SEND are following their usual curriculum whether learning in school or at home. Leaders use regular support sessions to check on pupils' well-being. This helps to gauge pupil motivation and updates teachers about pupils' needs. Pupils with SEND who are attending on site receive additional support. While all pupils with SEND are encouraged to be at school, attendance for this group is not as high as leaders would like.
- Trustees and those responsible for governance know the school well and have a clear understanding of its priorities. They have supported the school to develop remote education and have kept staff well-being in mind.
- The trust is providing support that is allowing the school to focus on improvement and the development of remote education. This support has led to improvements in the curriculum and for pupils with SEND.

Evidence

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

We also looked at school documentation, viewed recorded lessons and samples of pupils' work. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 40 free-text comments, and 40 staff questionnaires.

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

Yours sincerely

Tracey Reynolds
Her Majesty's Inspector