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18 March 2021

Vikki Garratt
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Dear Mrs Garratt

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Meynell Community Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Andrea Batley, 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 three successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in September 2019.

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:

- refine the curriculum in the more practical subjects, such as art and design and technology, to make sure that it meets the needs of pupils by following the model used in other subjects such as history and geography.

Context

- There have been no changes to the senior leadership team since the last inspection. However, some other staff have left the school and been replaced. These include a teacher, a member of the premises staff, two governors and a small number of teaching assistants and lunchtime supervisors.
- Across the autumn term 2020, just over three quarters of pupils had to be educated remotely at least once. Pupils in Nursery were more affected than other pupils.
- At the time of this inspection, just over three quarters of pupils were being educated at home, including three quarters of the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The remaining pupils were being educated in school.
- At the time of this inspection, few staff were absent due to COVID-19. Other staff have the capacity to cover their roles.

Main findings

- Leaders have ensured that all pupils are able to access education during the current period of restrictions. Staff have been trained to use technology to help them to provide online learning. You have worked with the trust to make sure that pupils who are learning remotely have access to devices and the internet. You have also provided a small number of pupils with paper-based learning packs. You have delivered stationery to all pupils to help them to complete the tasks they are set. You are providing parents with advice to help them support their children with their learning.
- Before the pandemic, leaders had plans in place for all the subjects in your curriculum. In some subjects, such as history and geography, you had fully implemented these plans and had refined them to make sure they were well sequenced and met the needs of your pupils. Your plans for similar work with some subjects have been delayed by COVID-19 restrictions. You plan to focus on pupils' mental health and well-being when school fully re-opens before you return to your work on the curriculum.

- You are following your usual curriculum as closely as possible during the latest period of restrictions. The work pupils complete remotely closely mirrors that done by pupils in school in subjects such as English, mathematics and history. However, you acknowledge pupils who are learning at home may not have access to the equipment and materials they need for subjects such as art and design technology. You are mindful of this when setting them tasks.
- Leaders are continuing to make sure that reading has the highest priority. Regular staff training is continuing. Pupils have access to quality texts. Pupils who are in the early stages of learning to read are able to continue with their phonics work, whether they are learning in school or at home. Leaders are continuing to promote the love of reading. Parents are able to collect books from school for use at home and all pupils can access a daily story time.
- The SEND coordinators make sure that all pupils with SEND receive support, whether they are learning in school or remotely. They support parents with regular and consistent contact. Currently, they are focussing on mental health and well-being assessments in preparation for the full re-opening of school.
- Governors know the school well because they receive a wealth of information from school leaders. Governors recognise and value the work that all school staff are doing to provide education in the current challenging circumstances. They are taking reasonable actions to both challenge and support leaders to ensure the school provides an education based on the usual curriculum as much as possible.
- The multi-academy trust have supported the school in ways which have allowed school staff to focus on providing education at this time. For example, they have sourced equipment and given technical support.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, the executive headteacher, other senior leaders, a representative of the multi-academy trust and representatives of those responsible for governance to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We looked at some curriculum plans and samples of pupils' work. We also observed pupils reading to a familiar adult. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 36 free-text responses, and 46 staff questionnaires.

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

Yours sincerely

Chris Cook
Her Majesty's Inspector