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Catherine Rindl
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Rindl

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Queen Victoria primary School

Following my remote inspection with Nicola Harwood, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), 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.

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 December 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:

- reintroduce lessons in all subjects
- continue to find out where pupils have gaps in their learning and adapt curriculum plans accordingly.

Context

- A mathematics subject leader left the school since the previous inspection. A deputy headteacher became the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) in September 2020.
- In the autumn term 2020, approximately one quarter of pupils spent some time being educated remotely because of COVID-19. Pupils in Year 1, Year 3 and Year 6 were affected more than others.
- Three quarters of pupils were learning remotely at the time of this inspection. Approximately four fifths of pupils who are vulnerable and around one third of those with education, health and care plans were attending on site.

Main findings

- Leaders have considered carefully their approach to providing education in the current circumstances. Since January 2021, leaders have provided pupils working at home with regular live sessions. You explained that the reason for this decision is because you believe that it is important for pupils to maintain face-to-face contact with each other and with their teachers. Leaders communicate well with parents and have explained methods for delivering lessons both at home and in school. As a result, most pupils regularly take part and complete the work that is set.
- Leaders have defined teachers' roles clearly. Teachers either work with pupils who are in school or those pupils who are at home. This approach has helped staff to provide frequent and clear explanations of new subject content to pupils. Leaders check that, in the subjects that are being taught, pupils receive lessons that are sequenced well and plan to build knowledge based on prior learning. Consequently, in these subjects, pupils know and remember more. However, some pupils are not learning all of their usual subjects. French has not been taught during the recent period of national restrictions.
- Curriculum leaders have adapted some subject plans. For example, in physical education, lessons currently focus on keeping pupils active, rather than teaching the range of knowledge and skills that pupils would usually learn. Leaders have identified areas of the curriculum that need to be taught when all pupils return to school.

- You have made reading a school priority. All pupils in Reception and key stage 1 classes receive daily phonics lessons. Pupils working at home access online books from the school's reading scheme. Teachers have a sharp focus on helping lower-ability pupils to catch up quickly. Pupils who are in school and a small number of those who are at home read to staff regularly. Other pupils working at home do not. This makes it difficult for teachers to check what pupils have remembered.
- Most vulnerable pupils learn in school. This means that in some subjects like music and art they continue to benefit from specialist teachers. Adults are also available to provide extra help to these pupils when required. Staff make regular checks on the well-being of vulnerable pupils who work at home. Leaders have clear plans to provide additional pastoral care to help these pupils make a smooth transition back to school.
- Leaders have worked hard to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive the help that they would in usual circumstances. They have put a system in place to provide targeted support to those who need it most. At the heart of this system, are named key workers who help pupils with SEND. These key workers link with teachers and families to provide one-to-one support for pupils. Teachers have also worked with some families on how to help their children learn at home. Specialist agencies continue to work with some pupils to ensure that their needs are met.
- Governors meet regularly with school leaders to review the quality of education that the school is providing at this time. They have a good understanding of the actions that leaders are taking to provide education at this time. They support leaders well. For example, they assisted leaders in providing electronic devices for pupils who need them.
- The school has made good use of the support offered by the local authority. As part of this support, curriculum leaders share good practice with other schools. Local authority guidance has also helped leaders to successfully develop their approach to providing education in the current circumstances.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We held meetings with the headteacher, four senior leaders, including the SENCo, curriculum leaders, pupils and governors. We also spoke to a representative from the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also examined the school's curriculum plans and viewed a range of examples from the school's remote education offer. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 25 free-text responses, and 38 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Dudley. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Leonard
Her Majesty's Inspector