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John McHenry
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Dear Mr McHenry

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of The Boston Grammar School

Following my remote inspection with Deborah Mosley, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 10 and 11 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 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 at its previous section 5 inspections. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in March 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:

- ensure that they fully implement plans to increase the breadth and scope of the food technology curriculum.

Context

- Leaders have appointed four new curriculum leaders in English, music, geography and modern foreign languages since the previous monitoring inspection in December 2019. The appointment of the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) was made permanent in September 2020.
- In the autumn term 2020, all pupils experienced at least one period of remote education because of COVID-19. Pupils in Year 9 were affected more than other pupils.
- Currently, almost all pupils are being educated at home. A very small proportion of pupils who are vulnerable, including some pupils with education, health and care plans, are attending school onsite.

Main findings

- You are managing the current circumstances well. You and other senior leaders have continued to develop the curriculum, while also responding to the challenges created by COVID-19. Staff check pupils' welfare regularly and make sure that they continue to learn.
- Senior leaders completed a review of the curriculum before the pandemic. Curriculum leaders have identified the important knowledge they want pupils to learn in each subject. They have planned the curriculum so that pupils learn new things in a logical order. This helps pupils make links to what they know already. The curriculum in years 7 to 9 is not as broad and ambitious as the national curriculum in all subjects. It does not include all elements of food technology. Leaders' plans to address this have been interrupted by the pandemic.
- You have taken appropriate steps to ensure that pupils can access their learning remotely or in school. Teachers provide pupils with live online lessons and work to do independently. You seek pupils' and parents' and carers' views on remote education and respond to any concerns. When necessary, you invite pupils to attend school on site to make sure that they do not fall behind with their learning.
- Teachers are delivering the usual curriculum in many subjects, with only minor changes. In subjects involving practical work, teachers have changed the work that they set. For instance, they have adapted practical work in design and technology to include materials pupils will have at home. Leaders plan to complete science experiments when all pupils are on site. Teachers

use effective strategies to help pupils remember specific knowledge and vocabulary. They provide useful feedback remotely, so that pupils can improve their work.

- Vulnerable pupils and others attending on site access the same lessons as pupils learning at home. You review these arrangements regularly in case there have been any changes to pupils' home circumstances. Pupils attending on site, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), get extra support from staff. This support helps these pupils to concentrate better on their learning.
- You are confident that pupils in Years 11 and 13 are on track to complete their courses. Curriculum leaders plan to revisit some topics to make sure that pupils' knowledge is secure. Leaders are supporting pupils in Years 11 and 13 to gain a sixth-form or university place, or an apprenticeship.
- Reading lists for each subject help pupils to broaden their knowledge. Leaders know how to support any pupils who struggle to read well. Some pupils attending on site get help to improve their reading but this support is not in place for pupils who are learning at home.
- Most pupils with SEND study the same curriculum as their peers. Teachers make effective use of information provided by the SENCo to adapt their curriculum plans. Leaders have modified the curriculum for a small number of these pupils so that they can access remote learning. Others benefit from extra help online from teaching assistants. Most parents of children with SEND who responded to Parent View agree that their children are well supported.
- Senior leaders have kept governors well informed during the current circumstances, including about the curriculum. Governors are supportive of leaders' work. They have helped you to respond to the challenges of providing remote education. For example, they have checked that disadvantaged pupils have the right equipment to access learning from home.
- Leaders and those responsible for governance benefit from taking part in local and national networks to share best practice.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, members of the senior leadership team, four curriculum leaders and the SENCo. We had discussions with a group of staff, a group of pupils and heard three pupils read. We held meetings with those responsible for governance and a representative of the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We considered information about the curriculum and reviewed examples of remote lessons, as well as other documentation provided by school leaders. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 74 free-text

responses, and 53 staff questionnaires. We also reviewed pupil, parent, and staff responses to school surveys about remote education.

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

Yours sincerely

Rachel Tordoff
Her Majesty's Inspector