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22 March 2021

David England
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mr England

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Riders Infant School

Following my remote inspection with Hanna Miller, 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 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:

- continue to develop the reading curriculum so that all pupils, especially the weakest readers, make the progress they should
- carry out the planned curriculum changes so that content is carefully chosen and sequenced in all subjects.

Context

- Since the last inspection a new executive headteacher and head of school have been appointed.
- Across the autumn term 2020 a third of pupils were educated remotely for a period of time. Reception children were most affected as they had to self-isolate on two separate occasions.
- At the time of the inspection 80% of pupils were being educated at home. All pupils with an education, health and care plan and 80% of vulnerable pupils were attending on site.

Main findings

- Leaders made the decision to move to online remote learning in January 2021 as they rightly wanted to ensure that as many pupils as possible could access recorded lessons. Leaders have also continued to provide paper packs for any parent who requests them. Staff have come up to speed quickly with the new way of working. Leaders support them well through training and time to plan. They assure themselves of the quality of resources by checking what teachers prepare.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils are covering the normal curriculum. Pupils, whether learning on site or at home, receive a daily diet of reading, including practising their phonics skills, writing and mathematics. In addition to these lessons, teachers also cover one other subject every day. The number of pupils accessing the online learning is high, but leaders are very aware that not all work set is being returned. As a result, they are not clear what progress all pupils learning at home are making.
- Leaders have begun to revise the content of all subjects. However, this new curriculum is not yet being delivered to the pupils. Leaders understand that putting these changes in place once the school is fully open will be vital for improving the quality of education.
- On her arrival, the new head of school placed a clear focus on improving pupils' reading. She and her team have concentrated on making sure the teaching of phonics is of consistent quality. As a result of this work, last term leaders saw pupils make progress with their reading skills. However, since

January, reading progress has slowed. Pupils working remotely have not had the same teaching support that has been available in school. Leaders have recently introduced an online reading scheme, but despite this pupils will need extra help when they return. Leaders intend to introduce further improvements to their reading programme over the next few months.

- When schools partially closed in January, a large number of vulnerable pupils' families chose for their children to work from home. Leaders set about working with parents to allay their fears about sending their children into school. This has been successful. Now, the majority of vulnerable pupils are learning on site and are well supported by adults.
- Leaders are working hard to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive the right provision. They have ensured that most of the pupils with SEND come into school for their learning. These pupils are benefiting from extra support from adults while they learn. However, a third of pupils with SEND are working from home. These pupils have not had the same level of support this term, but teachers do adapt the tasks that are set and contact home on a weekly basis to check on the progress that they are making.
- Governors have been focused on putting in place the right leadership structure and appointing the right personnel as part of their drive to improve the quality of education at the school. Since the new executive headteacher and head of school took up post in September 2020, the governors have been working with them to set out the strategic direction of the school. They have devised a virtual monitoring programme that is now giving them more evidence of the impact of the school's work. They have also made sure that they are well-informed about the education offered under the current circumstances. Through their work, governors are becoming increasingly confident in offering challenge as well as support to leaders.
- The local authority is the school's main source of external support. It has been able to provide leaders with access to expert advice on inclusion practice. This had a positive impact on pupils' behaviour during the autumn term 2020. The local authority has also given wider teaching and learning support to staff at the school. This has helped leaders to improve further the consistency and quality of curriculum delivery.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, pupils, staff, representatives of 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 also looked at some pupils' work, teaching materials and a range of school documentation. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View and 23 responses to the staff questionnaire.

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

Yours sincerely

Yasmin Maskatiya
Her Majesty's Inspector