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Delyth Roberts
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Dear Miss Roberts

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Castleford Three Lane Ends Academy

Following my remote inspection with Andrea Bedeau, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 23 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.

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:

- check the progression of the weakest readers, including those pupils in Years 3 to 6, in their reading fluency
- build on the school's positive work to ensure that teaching revisits pupils' learning, so that pupils know more and remember more across all subjects.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, five new members of staff have been appointed.
- During the autumn term 2020, approximately 50% of pupils had to be educated remotely. This included a Year 6 class which had to isolate twice. A Year 6 'bubble' and classes in Reception and Nursery also had to isolate.
- At the time of this inspection, approximately 70% of pupils were being educated at home. Approximately 50% of vulnerable pupils and 40% of pupils with education, health and care (EHC) plans were being educated on site.

Main findings

- Leaders place a high importance on pupils' education. You ensure that pupils learn a broad curriculum during the national restrictions. Pupils study the school's usual subjects. This includes pupils who learn on site and remotely. You have prioritised the development of the curriculum since the previous inspection. New curriculum plans started in autumn 2020. Teachers' understanding of pupils' progression through the curriculum in different subjects is now stronger. In light of the national restrictions, teachers have not been able to fully embed these new curriculum plans.
- Teachers provide pupils with structured lessons across a range of subjects. They work closely with families and pupils, particularly the most vulnerable. They make regular phone calls to families to support pupils' learning. This helps pupils to overcome difficulties that they might have completing their work. For example, in the early years, teachers gave some children modelling clay to use at home. This helped to develop these children's fine motor skills.
- Teachers consider how best to ensure that all pupils continue to learn the curriculum in the current circumstances. For instance, teachers revisit aspects of learning that pupils need to practise. This helps teachers to check pupils' understanding and address any misconceptions. Teachers have benefited from professional development. This has enabled teachers to plan the type of questions they ask pupils. These questions help pupils to revisit key knowledge from their previous work. This is particularly the case in mathematics. However, this approach is not used as effectively in other subject areas.

- The leadership team has prioritised the development of early reading. Staff have received training on the school's phonics approach. This was fully embedded in September 2020. Teachers plan additional support for those pupils who are at risk of falling behind in their phonics knowledge. This includes daily additional phonics sessions to help pupils catch up. Pupils continue to have regular reading sessions. For instance, staff in Nursery provide pupils with pre-recorded 'bedtime' stories.
- Teachers provide regular phonics sessions to pupils in the current circumstances. They ensure that pupils receive books to read at home and in school. These books match pupils' phonics knowledge. However, teachers do not check if weaker readers are keeping up with the phonics programme. This includes the weaker readers in Years 3 to 6. As a result, these pupils may not be doing as well in their reading as they could be.
- Leaders ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access effective support. Staff receive regular training. This helps them to better understand the needs of pupils with SEND. Staff work closely with the special educational needs coordinator. They review individual pupils' targets. Parents value the regular communication with school staff. This helps parents to be up to date about their children's learning. The school continues to work with external agencies in the current circumstances. This includes providing specialist support to pupils with EHC plans.
- Governors have a strong understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They meet regularly with leaders to scrutinise leaders' plans. This helps governors understand the quality of provision that pupils receive, including those pupils working remotely. Governors have well-considered plans to check on leaders' work. The governing body demonstrates a clear understanding of the school's journey and its next steps for improvement.
- The academy trust provides extensive support to school governors, leaders and teachers. It provides continued support and professional development for subject leaders. This helps to improve the school's curriculum plans. Trust members have a deep understanding of the school. They use their knowledge to provide the leadership team with support and challenge.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, the primary director, senior leaders, middle leaders, pupils, staff, representatives of those responsible for governance and the chief executive officer of Castleford Academy Trust. We discussed leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also scrutinised plans for remote learning, sampled pupils' work and recorded sessions for pupils receiving remote education. We looked at responses to Ofsted's

online questionnaire, Parent View, including 117 free-text responses. There were no responses to staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of Castleford Academy Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Wakefield. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Noeman Anwar
Her Majesty's Inspector