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Andy Krabbendam
Interim headteacher
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Dear Mr Krabbendam

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of West Melton Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Matthew Knox, 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 four successive judgements of requires improvement. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in January 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 not taking effective action to provide education in the current circumstances.

Leaders and those responsible for governance should take further action to urgently:

- embed the schools recently implemented remote education policy so that pupils' participation continues to improve
- ensure that curriculum plans set out what pupils are expected to know in all subjects at each point of their education
- enable all leaders, especially those for reading and special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to carry out regular checks in their areas of responsibility so that they can see what needs to improve.

Context

- Since the last inspection, a new interim headteacher and chair of the governing body have been appointed. Around half of the school's staff have been appointed since the last inspection.
- A large proportion of pupils were educated remotely during the autumn term. Two 'bubbles' had to close, affecting pupils in Years 1 to 4. Additionally, the school closed to all pupils in October due to a high proportion of staff being instructed to isolate.
- At the time of this inspection, around two thirds of pupils were being educated on site. Just over half of the school's vulnerable pupils and nearly all pupils with SEND were being educated on site. All pupils with education, health and care plans were being educated on site.

Main findings

- A new interim headteacher was appointed shortly before this inspection took place. Working with other senior leaders, he has quickly put in place much needed changes for safer working and remote learning.
- Arrangements for managing the risk of COVID-19 in the school have, until very recently, been weak. Arrangements had not been communicated effectively, implemented or adhered to. Staff told inspectors that they have not felt safe working in the school. The school closed to all pupils in October 2020 due to a very high proportion of staff being instructed to isolate.
- The curriculum has not been planned carefully enough. It does not set out what pupils should know and remember in each subject and when. The school's curriculum leader knows what needs to improve but has not had the opportunity to put this in place. The pandemic has delayed this further.
- The school's remote learning offer has lacked coordination and consistency. Until very recently, teachers have received insufficient guidance on the work that they should set for pupils. This has resulted in an ad-hoc approach and

low levels of pupil participation. Prior to the very recent improvements, around a quarter of pupils were not completing the work that teachers set. Staff made regular contact to ensure that these pupils were safe, but this did not result in getting enough pupils to complete their work. The remote education policy published on the school's website has not matched what has been happening.

- Over half of the school's vulnerable pupils have been educated on site. They get help from staff to complete their work. However, too few who are working remotely, complete their work regularly enough.
- There have been some improvements to the way that reading is taught. There is a well-sequenced programme for teaching phonics. Leaders have identified a wide range of texts and authors that pupils will study. Teachers read to pupils daily to promote a love of reading. Pupils working in school get extra help with reading. However, leaders have not checked on how well reading is being taught. They know that there are inconsistencies in teaching that have not been addressed. They are not sure that teachers' assessments of what pupils can do in phonics are accurate.
- Provision for pupils with SEND is inconsistent. Teachers do not always consider the needs of these pupils carefully enough when they are setting work. SEND pupils who are working remotely do not always get the help that they need. The SEND leader has not carried out checks or been enabled to tackle these inconsistencies.
- The governing body has been over reliant on what senior leaders have told them. Governors have not held school leaders to account for implementing agreed policies and procedures. The governing body recognises the very recent improvements that have been made. It has decided that the school will join a multi-academy trust.
- The support and challenge provided by the local authority has had limited impact. They know that the guidance they have provided has not been fully implemented. Nevertheless, they have taken recent and decisive action to strengthen leadership capacity.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, the deputy headteacher, a representative of the local authority, and those responsible for governance to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also met with a group of staff, listened to pupils read to adults in school and looked at examples of remote learning. We spoke to the leaders responsible for the curriculum, reading and SEND. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online

questionnaire, Parent View, including two free-text responses, and 10 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 Rotherham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Vic Wilkinson
Her Majesty's Inspector