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Ian Brierly
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Dear Mr Brierly

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Paget High School

Following my remote inspection with Sandra Hayes, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 25 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 three successive judgements of requires improvement. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in October 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:

- ensure that teachers accurately identify the gaps that have arisen in pupils' knowledge and ensure that these gaps are closed to enable pupils to build successfully on their prior learning
- ensure that music returns to the school's curriculum as soon as possible so that pupils can study the full breadth of the national curriculum.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, one new governor has joined the school's governing body.
- Across the autumn term 2020, approximately 60% of pupils had to be educated remotely at some point. You told us that Year 11 and the sixth form were affected more than others, due to repeated periods of self-isolation.
- At the time of this inspection, 95% of pupils were being educated at home. Of those pupils in school, approximately 50% are considered vulnerable and 22% are pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- A small number of staff are suffering the after-effects of having COVID-19. The school also has a small number of staff who are currently shielding. You have put plans in place so that these staff can continue to work from home.

Main findings

- You have a timetable of live lessons which closely mirrors the usual school curriculum. Leaders work hard to ensure that as many pupils as possible have access to digital technology. You have distributed a range of devices and ensured all students in the sixth form have a laptop. For those pupils without a device or who prefer paper-based learning, leaders ensure that work packs are delivered to families on a fortnightly basis. This means that all pupils can access some form of remote learning.
- Leaders have clear procedures in place to check pupils' engagement with online learning. Records for the sixth form show that access to live lessons is strong. However, in key stages 3 and 4, engagement in remote learning is not as high as in the sixth form.
- Leaders have adapted the school's curriculum to meet the current challenges. Staff rightly identified and modified aspects of the curriculum which are difficult to deliver remotely. For example, in practical subjects such as art, teachers adjust their lessons so that pupils use everyday household items in their production work. In addition, staff use visualisers so that they can model effectively and demonstrate learning remotely.

- You have been unable to recruit a member of staff to teach music. You have therefore removed music from the curriculum for this academic year. Leaders recognise the importance of pupils accessing the full breath of the national curriculum and the need to return music to the curriculum. You have plans to appoint a music teacher as soon as possible.
- Teachers effectively use quizzes to check pupils' learning during live lessons. Leaders will also assess pupils when they return to school. You are aiming to check what pupils have learned and remembered during this current lockdown period. You recognise the importance of teachers accurately identifying the gaps which pupils have in their knowledge in order to inform curriculum planning for the summer term. Your plans also include interventions for those who have fallen furthest behind.
- Vulnerable pupils and the children of key workers in school follow a similar timetable to those who are working remotely. For vulnerable pupils working at home, leaders check engagement closely to ensure that they access live lessons. Vulnerable pupils are engaging with remote learning at a similar level to their peers.
- Staff support pupils in Year 11 and students in Year 13 well. Pupils receive weekly personal, social, health and economic lessons which focus on coping strategies and mental health support. On top of this, leaders provide careers interviews to give pupils careers advice and guidance.
- You have strengthened support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff work well with pupils and their families to overcome the barriers to accessing education. Pupils with SEND continue to receive the extra help they would normally get, including support for reading. Leaders encourage more pupils with SEND to attend school so that they can receive additional support with their learning. Staff effectively check the attendance of pupils with SEND to online lessons and this is similar to other pupils across the school.
- Governance has improved since the last inspection. Governors know the school and the local community well and put pupils at the heart of what they do. They understand that staff have worked hard to produce a remote learning package. Governors continue to ask questions about the number of pupils engaging with live lessons. Staff's workload and well-being are also a priority for the governing body during this time. Governors effectively check that actions to support staff's workload are being addressed by leaders.
- The local authority has commissioned support to the school through an external agency. Staff benefit from this support, particularly in relation to inclusion and positive behaviour strategies for those pupils with SEND.

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 examples of online lessons as well as the school's curriculum plans. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including 33 free-text responses, and 66 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 Staffordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mark Howes
Her Majesty's Inspector