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Mark Phillips  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Phillips

### **Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Deptford Green School**

Following my remote inspection with Sophie Welch, 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 three successive judgements of requires improvement. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in October 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.**

## Context

- Since the last inspection, several new middle leaders and lead practitioners have been appointed. Three parents have joined the governing body as associate members.
- During the autumn term 2020, around half of pupils were required to work at home during periods of self-isolation. The whole of Years 7 and 11 were isolated as 'bubbles', each on one occasion.
- At the time of this inspection, most pupils were learning at home. Around half of all vulnerable pupils were attending on site. In addition, around a third of all pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan were in school.

## Main findings

- Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking the necessary actions to provide education in the current circumstances. Pupils follow their usual timetables through live and pre-recorded online lessons. These are supplemented by tasks for them to complete independently. Additional literacy and numeracy work is sent home where required.
- Teachers have received training in how to make effective use of the school's online learning platform. For example, they have started to use the 'breakout room' facility. Lesson times have been reduced by ten minutes to allow for screen breaks. Middle and senior leaders drop into online lessons, to check pupils' attendance and engagement.
- Prior to the pandemic, leaders began a review of the curriculum. They decided to allow more time for pupils to study a broad range of subjects in Years 7 to 9.
- The new curriculum model was introduced in September 2020. However, immediate revisions to subject planning were needed to address gaps in pupils' knowledge as a result of the pandemic.
- Subject leaders believe that the new curriculum is starting to improve pupils' retention of knowledge. However, formal mechanisms for checking how well pupils are learning the curriculum are still in development. This is a priority for heads of faculty.
- Around half of vulnerable pupils and children of key workers are learning at home. Each pupil has a dedicated member of staff, who makes regular contact to check on well-being, as well as how pupils are managing with online learning. The pupils who work remotely complete the same lessons and the same work as those attending school.

- Pupils in Year 11 attend all timetabled lessons online. Pupils completed internal assessments in all subjects during the autumn term. Leaders are ensuring Year 11 pupils get the support they need with applications for post-16 college places.
- More time has been given to basic literacy and numeracy skills in Year 7. Teachers deliver a phonics programme as well as comprehension and vocabulary lessons to pupils who struggle with reading. Leaders realise the importance of supporting these pupils early so that they can access the full curriculum.
- Leaders communicate regularly with families of all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This helps them identify the best support for each pupil. Leaders invited all pupils with EHC plans into school but not all took up the offer. The school provides personalised remote support for pupils with autism spectrum disorder who attend the resourced provision. Pupils with SEND continue to have access to a range of extra help as usual, both online and in person. A small group of pupils are at the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. These pupils attend school on Monday and Thursday for face-to-face support.
- Governors are well informed and willing to challenge leaders to ensure all pupils can access a quality curriculum. They ask the right questions. Their next step is to re-establish regular meetings between themselves and heads of faculty, which they are setting up remotely. They are eager to get more involved in the monitoring of the remote learning offer.
- Leaders at Deptford Green have been working with a teaching school alliance for 18 months. This work has focused on curriculum development. At first, a group of subject specialists visited the school, watched lessons and looked at schemes of work. After a pause during the first lockdown, they continued their work on a remote basis. This support continues to have a positive impact on subject leaders. They feel more confident and said that they have a greater sense of ownership of the curriculum in their subjects.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, senior leaders, pupils, staff, representatives of those responsible for governance and leaders from a teaching school alliance who are providing external support. We discussed leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also looked at some pre-recorded lessons. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 53 written responses, and 47 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 Lewisham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lisa Strong  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**