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Claire Temple
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Dear Ms Temple

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Sandbrook Primary School

Following my remote inspection 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 2020.

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 the curriculum plans in each subject identify more clearly how learning in key stage 1 will build on the knowledge that children gain in the early years.

Context

- Two new teachers joined the school after the last inspection. One new governor has been appointed. Two co-opted governors resigned in autumn 2020. Their vacancies have yet to be filled.
- During the autumn term 2020, approximately one third of pupils were educated at home at some point for a short period of time because of COVID-19.
- At the time of this inspection, about half of all pupils were being educated at home and half on site. Four fifths of vulnerable pupils and half of those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) were attending school on site.

Main findings

- From March 2020, you made sure that staff, pupils, parents and carers became familiar with a range of methods for learning at home. You and other leaders work with families to ensure that pupils with the greatest needs attend school. You made sure that pupils had the devices they needed to learn online or were provided with paper resources. This meant that during this latest national lockdown period pupils readily switched to this approach with little disruption to their learning.
- Prior to March 2020, you and other leaders were well on your way to making the necessary changes to the curriculum. You, other leaders and staff thought carefully about what pupils will learn. In several subjects, such as geography and history, curriculum plans clearly outline the knowledge that pupils will learn and the order in which they will build this knowledge. However, in these new subject plans it is unclear how pupils in key stage 1 will build on the knowledge that they develop in the early years.
- Staff teach most of the school's usual curriculum to all pupils whether they are in school or at home. You have amended some units of work so that concepts that you consider are more complex for pupils to understand will be taught face to face. For instance, in mathematics, pupils in the combined Years 5 and 6 class will learn about ratios after they all return to school.
- Pupils at home and at school watch daily videos created by teachers to explain the work for them to complete. This is helping pupils to continue to build, and remember, their knowledge in each subject. Teachers and teaching

assistants give extra help to pupils, including vulnerable pupils and those with SEND, who need support.

- You and other leaders keep a focus on improving the teaching of reading. Teachers read stories to all pupils daily whether they are in school or at home. Staff have completed training on how to teach reading, so they are better equipped to deliver the school's new approach to teaching phonics. Pupils learning at home continue to learn to read; they watch videos made by teachers which show them how to say letter sounds accurately. Pupils practise reading with reading books that match the sounds that they already know. This helps pupils to develop their confidence and fluency in reading. Pupils, including vulnerable pupils, who struggle with phonics receive additional support from teaching staff. This helps them to keep up with their classmates.
- The acting SEND coordinator links with other professionals and with parents to ensure that information about pupils' learning and development is shared and reviewed properly. This means that staff are increasingly able to give pupils the support that they need at home and school. Pupils with SEND are learning the same curriculum as other pupils at the school.
- Governors support you. They also appropriately challenge the decisions you make and the actions that you and other leaders take in the improvement of the school. For instance, one governor checked on the effectiveness of the school's remote education. Another governor met with the acting SEND coordinator to gain an overview of how well staff support this group of pupils with learning in all subjects of the curriculum. Governors make sure that you and staff have the resources needed to maintain pupils' education in the current circumstances. For example, governors agreed to the purchase of laptops for some pupils.
- You and other leaders make effective use of the support and challenge available to you from a national education charity. This has led to a deeper understanding by you, other leaders and staff of how pupils gain new knowledge. This is helping you and other leaders to make appropriate changes to the school curriculum. The local authority assisted you in the review of the school's current provision for remote education, which led to stronger provision in this aspect.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. I spoke with you, the acting deputy headteacher who is also the acting SEND coordinator, two teachers, representatives of those responsible for governance and two representatives of the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

I also spoke with a group of pupils from the combined Years 5 and 6 class. I looked at the 15 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 10 free-text responses, and seven staff questionnaires. I checked examples of the school's curriculum documents across a range of subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Tim Vaughan
Her Majesty's Inspector