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Maria Ellel
Headteacher
Wellfield Methodist and Anglican Church School
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Dear Mrs Ellel

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Wellfield Methodist and Anglican Church School

Following my remote inspection with John Tomlinson, 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 two 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:

- stabilise and strengthen the staffing in the school, ensuring that staff are suitably trained to deliver the planned curriculum.

Context

- Since January 2020, three members of teaching staff have left the school. There have been several new appointments of teachers and support staff, although some of these are temporary. A deputy headteacher has been seconded from another school to work at Wellfield Methodist and Anglican Church School until the end of the summer term 2021.
- During the autumn term 2020, nearly all pupils had to be educated remotely for short periods of time due to self-isolation.
- At the time of this inspection, about three quarters of pupils were being educated from home. Almost all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and those who are vulnerable, were attending school.

Main findings

- You and the leadership team have continued to improve the school's curriculum plans, despite the impact of the pandemic. You and the staff team have also thought carefully about how to adapt the curriculum throughout the current restrictions. You have made sure that pupils have access to an appropriate range of curriculum subjects, whether they are learning from home or in school. You have taken the necessary action to provide education in the current circumstances.
- Prior to March 2020, subject leaders were well on the way to revising and refining the subject content of the curriculum. For example, you and other leaders had identified the important knowledge that pupils must know and remember. You had taken effective steps to ensure that the curriculum becomes increasingly ambitious for all pupils. This work has had a positive impact on curriculum plans in most subject areas, especially in English, mathematics and history.
- Despite your positive work on the school's curriculum plans, you and the governors have not stabilised the staffing so that the new ambitious curriculum plans can be delivered effectively. There has been some turbulence in staffing and there remain key staff vacancies.
- Despite the challenges that you have faced with staffing and implementing the new curriculum, teachers ensure that pupils are currently learning well, whether they are working from home or in school. They all benefit from the same curriculum offer. Teachers check pupils' understanding and provide

effective support to those who struggle with their work. Teachers also prioritise the development of pupils' social skills to make up for the fact that many of them are not seeing their classmates each day.

- You and other staff prioritise reading. You have thought carefully about how best to teach reading during this current time. For example, children in the early years and those pupils in key stage 1 continue to benefit from daily phonics sessions with their class teacher. Despite the pandemic, they are keeping pace with the letters and sounds that you expect them to know at this time of the year. Teachers provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to practise their phonic knowledge, where needed.
- Vulnerable pupils are learning well. If they struggle to access learning, they benefit from the extra help from support staff. You and the staff contact any vulnerable pupils that are working from home and you are quick to act if you have concerns.
- You have made considerable improvements to the support that you offer to pupils with SEND. Staff are quick to identify pupils' individual learning needs and any additional support that they require. You and other staff ensure that pupils with SEND receive a similar education to that they would usually experience. You check regularly on the small number of pupils with SEND that are not attending school to make sure that they are keeping up with their learning.
- Members of the governing body have a clear oversight of curriculum improvement. Governors have been effective in holding you to account. For example, they have checked on pupils' engagement with remote education and the actions that leaders have taken to improve pupils' learning during the pandemic.
- The local authority provides a wide range of support and challenge. This support has helped you to develop your new curriculum plans. The local authority has also helped you to source valuable temporary staff, including leaders, to keep the school operational.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke with you, the associate deputy headteacher, other leaders, staff and pupils. We also spoke with members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and an adviser from the Methodist Academies and Schools Trust to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We examined a range of documents provided by the school, including minutes of governing body meetings and a sample of the school's curriculum plans. We looked

at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. This included 39 free-text responses. We also reviewed the 18 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

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

Yours sincerely

Sue Eastwood
Her Majesty's Inspector