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Claire Claydon
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Claydon

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Gusford Community Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Katherine Douglas, 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 November 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.

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

- ensure that teachers plan and revisit learning across subjects, in the right order, so that pupils remember more of what they have learned, while supporting pupils to make connections between previous learning and the new things they are taught
- ensure that assessment information is used effectively to identify gaps in pupils' learning, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), so that support is precisely targeted and the difference that interventions are making is checked regularly to inform any further improvements needed.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, there have been changes to the local governing body, including a new chair and vice chair of governors. Some existing staff have been promoted into middle leadership roles.
- During the autumn term 2020, only a small number of pupils had to work remotely due to the pandemic. The school's pupils in Year 5 were most affected by the need to isolate.
- At the time of this inspection, around one fifth of the school's pupils were being educated on site, including most of the school's vulnerable pupils and those with an education, health and care plan. Pupils from Year 5 form the biggest year group of pupils currently learning in school.
- At the time of this inspection, a small number of staff were self-isolating owing to COVID-19.

Main findings

- Pupils are provided with learning experiences that cover a broad range of subjects. Experiences are similar, whether pupils are working remotely from home or whether they are taught in school. You and your leadership team have listened to the views of parents. Consequently, you have made changes to remote learning so that it is more accessible for pupils and families. Staff make regular checks to make sure that pupils have the resources they need to help them to learn.
- Teachers are confident in using the school's online learning platform because of the training they have received. The school's own survey of parents' views shows that most parents are increasingly positive about the quality of remote education on offer.
- Following the previous inspection, you and your leadership team made changes to planning for learning across subjects. New leaders were appointed

with oversight of the quality of learning in specialist subject areas. Staff have improved the way they check on pupils' learning so that they can plan the steps needed to take pupils to the next stage.

- Senior leaders and subject leads are working to ensure that planning for learning is of consistently high quality across the school, including in subjects beyond English and mathematics. This aspect of the school's work, and how pupils are supported to make connections across different subjects, is still evolving.
- Since the previous inspection, the leadership team has reviewed the way reading is taught in the early years. You and your team are also checking on pupils' reading and vocabulary knowledge and skills development as they move through the school. The early year's team are accessing a programme of national training focusing on pupils' speech, language and communications development.
- Books are now more closely matched to the sounds and letters that children are learning, in lessons and remotely from home. Greater emphasis is put on promoting a love of reading through regular story time and discussions with pupils about the books they are reading. The trust has provided additional support for school staff to improve the quality of the teaching of reading.
- Staff make regular checks on the well-being of vulnerable pupils, who are learning from home. Effective systems are in place to follow up on pupils' welfare, both in school and when pupils are learning remotely.
- Activities are adapted to meet the needs of pupils with SEND, whether they are learning from home or in school. Although the school's special educational needs team provides teachers with information about how to meet pupils' needs, these strategies are not always being used effectively to support individual pupils to make as much progress in the curriculum as they should.
- The new local governing body works closely with the trust to ensure that leaders are held to account for the performance of the school. Governors are mindful of their responsibilities to ensure that all pupils have the best opportunity to succeed. The trust's senior leaders provide additional strategic support and challenge, with a focus on securing rapid improvements to the provision.
- A trust appointed school improvement partner meets regularly with the headteacher and other school staff. Additional specialist support is helping to improve provision across subjects, especially in early reading, English and mathematics. Curriculum leaders make effective use of the resources available through national subject associations, and local subject groups, to support staff development and to improve teaching quality.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, the chief executive officer, director of education and the school improvement partner from the Active Learning Trust. We also spoke with governors, including the chair of the local governing body, subject leaders, the school's special educational needs coordinator and reading leaders, including the early years lead. We heard pupils read and spoke with them about their work. The focus of our meetings was to discuss leaders' actions to provide education for all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also looked at examples of recorded lessons with senior leaders responsible for reviewing the quality of teaching and learning. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 51 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for school staff. There were no free text responses received from parents during the inspection. We took account of the views of 120 parents expressed in the school's own survey of its remote learning offer.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer or equivalent of the Active Learning Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Suffolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Christine Dick
Her Majesty's Inspector