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Martha Hughes
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Dear Mrs Hughes

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Langer Primary Academy

Following my remote inspection with Marc White, Her Majesty's Inspector, of your school on 4 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 have serious weaknesses.

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 was judged to have serious weaknesses at its previous section 5 inspection. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in March 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:

- develop recent improvements to the curriculum so that staff are confident and consistent in its delivery
- ensure that teachers continue to accurately identify when pupils are falling behind so they are best able to support pupils to catch up quickly in all areas of learning, particularly in phonics, when pupils are in the early stages of learning to read.

Context

- Since the inspection in March 2020, four new teachers have joined the school, including a special needs coordinator (SENCo) who is also a senior teacher. Currently, your assistant headteacher is acting deputy headteacher. There is a new chair of governors and a new governor has joined the governing body.
- Since the autumn term 2020, approximately half of the pupils have had to learn from home due to COVID-19.
- At the time of this inspection, approximately two thirds of pupils were attending school. This included the majority of vulnerable pupils. Leaders have offered places to all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Almost all are attending on site.

Main findings

- Since the previous inspection, the trust has supported you to make important changes to the curriculum so that it is better suited for the pupils at your school. This includes strengthening the delivery of phonics, mathematics and the early years curriculum. You are currently implementing a new relationships education (RSE) curriculum.
- You are providing effective education for all pupils during the current circumstances. You and your staff are using technology confidently to ensure that pupils' experience of learning is as close as possible to what they would normally receive.
- The welfare of pupils and staff are at the core of your remote education planning and delivery. Teachers are of the view that seeing pupils every day, virtually or in school, has 'lifted their hearts'. Leaders have considered carefully what is best for pupils' well-being. For example, from your evaluation, you made the decision to place greater emphasis on physical exercise and well-being. Pupils now undertake a daily physical session. Pupils enjoy the various challenges such as the recent skipping competition.
- Due to restrictions with pupils' access to resources at home, you have delayed the teaching of design technology and some aspects of computing. There are

plans to teach what pupils miss in these subjects when pupils return fully to school.

- The new phonics curriculum is making a positive difference. Daily phonics teaching is helping pupils to catch up. According to teachers' checks, a larger proportion of the pupils who are learning to read are where they should be at this time of year. You are pleased with the improvements in the teaching of reading, but you recognise that there is more to do, particularly to identify and support pupils in the early stages of their reading development that need to catch up.
- You have prioritised reading. Teachers make sure that pupils read books that contain the sounds that pupils know. Books are changed regularly so pupils can practise the sounds they are learning. Pupils also have access to online texts to encourage pupils to read for pleasure. Pupils spoke to inspectors enthusiastically about how they enjoy reading at home.
- Throughout the current restrictions, the SENCo has contacted parents to help teachers adapt online learning according to pupils' needs. A range of additional support is provided to pupils with SEND in school and at home so pupils feel confident in their learning. The SENCo checks that the individual support is suited to each pupil's particular needs. As a result, pupils with SEND access the full curriculum.
- Vulnerable pupils are receiving the same education as their peers. Those who are being taught at school are joined virtually by those who are at home. You have made sure that pupils continue to access external services, such as play therapy. You and your staff support families, providing access to devices, food parcels and charitable donations. Many parents expressed the view in the Ofsted survey, that staff have gone 'above and beyond' to support pupils at this time.
- Governors continue to provide support and challenge to school leaders. They hold virtual meetings as well as visit leaders on site to check the quality of education pupils are receiving. Governors show a clear understanding of the school's priorities, as well as the daily challenges that leaders currently face. They are mindful of the well-being of staff under the current circumstances.
- The trust has provided valuable support. You and your leaders receive regular support from both the raising standards leader, and the director for primary education. Staff benefit from the trust's networks and training seminars. The local authority has provided support with the planning of the new RSE curriculum.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders including the SENCo, seven members of staff and a group of pupils. We also spoke to the trust's chief executive officer, the trust director of primary education, a trust appointed governor and the chair of governors to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also scrutinised recordings of live lessons. We observed online, in real time, a teacher delivering a phonics lesson. We considered leaders' documentation for remote education, including the information on the school's website. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 13 free-text responses, and 13 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local governing body, chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Unity Schools Partnership (multi-academy trust), regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Suffolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Liz Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector