

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



30 March 2021

Annette Blewett
Headteacher
Spring Meadow Infant & Nursery School
High Barns
Ely
Cambridgeshire
CB7 4RB

Dear Mrs Blewett

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Spring Meadow Infant & Nursery School

Following my remote inspection with Maureen Su, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), 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 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 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:

- ensure subject leaders have a clear understanding of what their roles and responsibilities are so they know what they are accountable for and can make sure the curriculum is well considered, implemented and evaluated throughout the school
- increase the knowledge and understanding of the governing body so they can effectively provide a balance of support and challenge that helps the school to improve.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, three teachers and six members of support staff have left the school. In April 2020, a governor already in post took on the role of the chair of governors. Three governors have left, and two new governors have been recruited.
- Throughout the autumn term 2020, only a very small number of individual pupils had to isolate.
- At the time of this inspection, 46% of pupils were attending school. 93% of vulnerable pupils were attending school. 89% of pupils with education, health and care plans (EHC plans) were attending school.
- Since the start of the pandemic, leaders have provided support to members of staff who are identified as extremely clinically vulnerable.

Main findings

- Leaders and those responsible for governance are providing education in the current circumstances. The curriculum development work you began has been delayed due to Covid-19 restrictions. As a result of this, subject leaders have not had the training they need to fully understand their roles and responsibilities in leading a subject throughout the school.
- Pupils currently access a combination of 'live' sessions, recorded lessons and paper-based work whether they are learning in school or at home. When pupils have had difficulty accessing electronic devices and online learning, you have supported pupils appropriately so they are still able to learn. Leaders have responded quickly by offering pupils who are finding it difficult to learn at home a place in school. This ensures that these pupils receive additional help.
- Whether pupils are learning at home or in school, leaders are typically providing a curriculum that is closely matched to the usual curriculum. As a result of parent feedback, teachers have changed some of the online resources they provide. More 'live' lessons now take place. This is helping teachers to provide immediate support for pupils to improve their work. There have been some

changes to the order in which some practical aspects of art and physical education are taught. Where pupils have not got the resources they need, teachers have moved some content to be taught when pupils are fully returned to school.

- Leaders understand the needs of vulnerable pupils, as well as the children of key workers who attend on site. Staff place a high priority on providing education for pupils, as well as using the communication opportunities they have to check on pupils' well-being. The few vulnerable pupils that are learning from home have daily contact with a member of staff. As a result, any concerns can be addressed quickly.
- There is a shared, whole-school approach to reading. Leaders have increased the library selection to promote a love of reading. Pupils are able to collect books weekly to take home. Live phonics sessions happen daily. Teachers make consistent use of follow-up reading and writing activities to help develop pupils' knowledge and skills. Leaders have thought carefully about what they need to do to help pupils catch up with their reading.
- Pupils with an EHC plan have an adapted curriculum that meets their individual needs. This is being delivered whether the pupils are at home or in school. The special educational needs coordinator checks the work is well suited to pupils' needs. Teaching assistants are being used well to teach small group sessions. Leaders said that the Infant Assessment Unit (IAU) is working with pupils as it usually would. Where a few pupils have to learn from home, they receive individualised, online teaching from a member of staff.
- The governing body has asked questions about remote education, the curriculum and how pupils are learning from home. Governors have also carried out safeguarding checks. The new chair of governors is undertaking training. Governors know that there needs to be a more focused approach to checking how well pupils are doing. Governors are keen to learn and want to improve, so they can effectively support leaders in their work.
- Since September 2020, the local authority adviser has provided support and challenge to leaders. There is a clear understanding of what leaders need to do next and how support can be used most effectively. Support has focused on remote education, English and curriculum leadership. The local authority adviser is keen to visit the school to work alongside staff once restrictions allow.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, pupils, staff (including those working in the IAU), representatives of those responsible for governance and a representative of the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also carried out work scrutiny, observed recorded lessons and looked at planning documentation. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 17 free-text responses, and 24 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 Cambridgeshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Isabel Davis
Her Majesty's Inspector