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Gemma Andrews
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Andrews

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Castle Hill Junior School

Following my remote inspection with Hannah Stoten, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 23 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 at its previous section 5 inspection. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in February 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:

- make sure leaders check that the school's curriculum is enabling pupils to achieve well in all subjects.

Context

- Since the previous inspection there have been few changes to leadership, staffing or the composition of the local governing body. In September 2020, an experienced governor was elected as chair of the local governing body.
- During the autumn term 2020, approximately 30% of pupils experienced periods of remote education because of COVID-19. This included a Year 3 class 'bubble' who had to work from home for nine days.
- At the time of the inspection, approximately 20% of all pupils were being educated on site. Around 25% of all identified vulnerable pupils and 10% of pupils with education, health and care (EHC) plans were being educated on site.

Main findings

- You and your leaders are committed to providing a broad and interesting education for pupils in the current circumstances. Over recent months, you have adapted how teaching is organised and delivered so that the curriculum in all subjects can be taught remotely. Teachers work together to plan and deliver live or recorded lessons. Pupils can access these whether working from home or in school.
- In almost all subjects, teachers are continuing with the usual curriculum. Some practical aspects of science have been postponed until pupils are back in school. In modern foreign languages, teachers are revisiting previously taught content before moving on to new learning. You plan for pupils to have caught up with any missed learning by the end of the summer term 2021.
- You and your leaders have focused on improving the school's curriculum. Subject leaders have identified the important content to be taught in every subject and in each year group. This helps teachers to assess what pupils should already know and understand what pupils will learn in the future. While subject leaders have supported teachers to deliver the school's curriculum, leaders have not yet checked that this is ensuring pupils learn successfully.
- At the time of the previous inspection, you and your leaders were taking action to improve reading across the school. Since then, you have purchased a range of high-quality texts that support the curriculum and encourage pupils to want to read. In September 2020, you and your leaders introduced a new approach to the teaching of reading. Staff are able to teach your chosen

approach consistently across the school because they have benefited from effective training and guidance. Teachers support each other by sharing lesson plans, resources and ideas.

- The high-quality reading curriculum has continued while pupils are learning from home. Pupils in Year 3 and Year 4, who are at the early stages of reading, have daily recorded phonics and spelling lessons. They complete related activities so teachers can check what they have learned. Teachers provide pupils with reading books that match the letters and sounds they know. Staff regularly hear these pupils read and provide additional support, either online or in school. Pupils at an early stage of reading are making stronger progress in phonics than previously.
- Leaders have made sure that vulnerable pupils come into school to learn or receive additional support to continue their education at home. This includes extra help for parents, if needed. Teachers adapt online resources so pupils do not need so much parental support. The pastoral team carry out regular checks on the welfare of pupils who are learning at home or who are attending an alternative provision.
- Leaders work closely with families to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can learn successfully both on site and remotely. Pupils with SEND are provided with personalised programmes, additional resources and specialist support that is tailored to their individual needs. Parents of pupils with SEND, who are accessing remote education, benefit from seeing and understanding how their children are taught.
- Governors make a positive contribution to school improvement. They check important aspects of the school's work such as safeguarding and provision for pupils with SEND. Once COVID-19 restrictions have lifted, governors plan to restart visits to the school and check how well pupils are achieving.
- The trust has an accurate understanding of both the school's strengths and what still needs to improve. Trust leaders use this knowledge to make sure that the school receives the right support and guidance. You and your staff have benefited from training to improve the quality of education. Additionally, you and your staff have opportunities to work with other schools in the trust to develop and share effective practice. Trust leaders check that actions to improve the school take place quickly so that you and your staff can meet the high expectations held for all pupils.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and members of the inclusion team, phase leaders, subject leaders, teachers, three governors including the chair of the local

governing body, the chief executive officer (CEO) and the deputy CEO of the trust. Discussions focused on leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also scrutinised curriculum planning documents, the school's website, online teaching resources, pupils' work and minutes of local governing body meetings. We looked at the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 19 free-text responses, and reviewed the 60 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire. Additionally, we observed pupils reading to staff and spoke with a group of pupils about their learning.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the ASSET Education multi-academy 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

Fiona Webb
Her Majesty's Inspector