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Colette Singleton
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Dear Mrs Singleton

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Fazakerley High School

Following my remote inspection with Will Smith, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 2 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 special measures.

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 require special measures at its previous section 5 inspection. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in October 2019.

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:

- enable teachers to use assessment effectively, including when teaching remotely, so that they can adapt their teaching to meet pupils' needs, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)
- make sure that the weakest readers, including those with possible gaps in their phonics knowledge, are supported to become fluent readers, including during any periods of remote education.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, 23 members of staff have left the school. 23 staff, including three new assistant headteachers, have been appointed. The previous headteacher left the school in December 2020. You became the interim headteacher in January 2021. The school is due to join a multi-academy trust (MAT) on 1 July 2021.
- During autumn term 2020, about seven out of ten pupils were educated remotely for short periods of time. This included all of the pupils in Year 10.
- At the time of this inspection, approximately nine out of ten pupils were being educated at home. Over half of vulnerable pupils, and those pupils with an education, health and care plan, were being educated at school.

Main findings

- Pupils continue to study their normal timetable. You have ensured that all pupils educated at home access the same lessons and online resources as those in school. This is helping to maintain continuity and momentum in pupils' learning. The steps that you, other leaders and governors have taken mean that education is available to all pupils, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic.
- Before the pandemic, subject leaders reviewed the school's curriculum. Pupils in key stage 3, including lower-ability pupils and those with SEND, now have more time to study humanities and languages.
- Since the pandemic started, leaders have adapted the key stage 3 curriculum further. This is to give pupils a stronger foundation on which to build when they start their key stage 4 studies. Subject leaders are continuing to review and develop curriculum plans to identify what pupils need to know so that they are able to build on their prior learning.
- You have adjusted curriculum plans so that pupils can continue with their learning whether they are in school or at home. Staff feel well supported by the training that they have received to deliver remote education. You have ensured that all pupils have access to specialist equipment so that they can

access 'live' lessons. Staff communicate regularly with vulnerable pupils and their families. This helps to ensure that pupils' learning and emotional well-being are supported effectively.

- Pupils recently completed assessments in all subjects. Teachers designed the assessments to find out how well pupils had remembered the most important knowledge taught since the pandemic began. Teachers have also started to experiment with different ways to check on pupils' learning in the current circumstances, especially for those pupils who are learning remotely. For example, as lessons unfold some teachers ask pupils to post written answers. Despite the introduction of these strategies, the systems for checking pupils' learning are not well developed. Teachers are often unaware how well pupils are understanding and remembering new subject content. As a result, teachers are unable to routinely adapt their teaching to meet pupils' needs.
- You have clear plans in place to support pupils with SEND. Teachers have started to teach in a way that supports the learning of these pupils. For example, many break down their instructions into small, clear steps. Even so, teachers do not fully meet the needs of these pupils when they are learning from home. This is because leaders have not yet developed the systems needed to provide personalised, subject-specific support during remote learning.
- In September 2020, you and other leaders launched a new and ambitious strategy to improve pupils' reading. For example, all pupils in Years 7 to 9 now have time devoted to reading each week. During this time, they read a diverse and exciting range of novels. Leaders have modified some elements of their strategy during the current period of national lockdown. For example, the texts that pupils read have been extended to include non-fiction articles. Despite the promotion of reading for all pupils, the strategies to support the weakest readers, including those with gaps in their phonics knowledge, are underdeveloped. Some pupils still have access to online programmes to improve their reading. However, leaders do not routinely check that these pupils are making use of these resources.
- Pupils in Year 11 continue to study their usual examination courses. They value the careers advice and guidance that they receive. This prepares them well for their next steps in education, training or employment.
- Governors are increasingly effective at supporting and holding you and other leaders to account. They meet with leaders more regularly. This has helped governors to check on improvements to the curriculum and ensure that leaders are providing education for pupils in the current circumstances.
- Officers from the local authority have liaised with the MAT that the school is due to join. This has ensured that the local authority and MAT leaders have been able to support improvement in different areas. Leaders have received

significant support to deepen their understanding of what constitutes an effective curriculum. The impact of this support can be seen in the improvements to curriculum planning.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We held meetings with you, other senior leaders, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, staff, pupils, three members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. This was to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also carried out a review of the curriculum that pupils are receiving. This included the arrangements for delivering the curriculum remotely. We examined a range of documentation, including curriculum plans and minutes of governing body meetings. We also analysed 47 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 38 free-text responses from parents. We also considered 29 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

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

Yours sincerely

Ahmed Marikar
Her Majesty's Inspector