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Robyn Parry-McDermott
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Dear Mrs Parry-McDermott

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Thrybergh Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Andrea Batley, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 17 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.

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 October 2019.

Having considered all the evidence and taking into account the impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus) 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:

- set out what pupils are expected to learn in reading at each point throughout key stage 2
- implement fully the school's assessment procedures so that teachers check on what pupils know and remember in each subject.

Context

- Since the last inspection, there have been two chairs of the governing body. The current chair has held the position previously.
- When the school was only open to some children due to COVID-19 restrictions at the start of the spring term, around three quarters of pupils were educated at home. Around three quarters of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) were educated on site. A similar proportion of vulnerable pupils were also educated on site.
- At the time of this inspection, all pupils were attending on site.

Main findings

- Leaders have planned a broad curriculum, which is designed for the pupils at the school. The curriculum sets out what pupils are expected to know, remember and do in all subjects throughout their time in school. Leaders have identified important concepts, such as 'community', that they want pupils to understand in depth. The curriculum regularly revisits these concepts to help pupils understand them better. The impact of COVID-19 has slowed work on the curriculum. Plans are at an early stage of being implemented.
- Leaders have developed a programme called 'broadening horizons'. This sets out what pupils will experience to help them learn the curriculum. Leaders have ensured that this programme has continued throughout the pandemic. Recently, pupils have undertaken a virtual trip to Chester Zoo, worked with staff from a local museum and have joined in workshops about the Second World War.
- Some changes have been made to the curriculum as a result of COVID-19. Content in some subjects, including physical education and music, has been adapted or moved to be taught at a later time. Teachers have checked which parts of the curriculum have not been learned well enough while some pupils have been learning remotely. Teachers are reteaching the important parts.
- Leaders have designed a new assessment system to check on how well pupils remember what has been taught in all subjects. However, this has not been fully implemented.

- Phonics is taught well. Teachers know which sounds pupils should know and when. Pupils use their phonics knowledge well to help them read unfamiliar words. The books that pupils read match the sounds that they know.
- Leaders have set out what they want pupils to learn in reading in key stage 2. However, these plans do not make clear enough what will be taught and when. This means that teachers cannot make accurate checks on how pupils are progressing or identify quickly enough where extra help is needed.
- The majority of vulnerable pupils and those with SEND were educated on site during the spring term. Teachers provided extra help to those who needed it. Teachers regularly checked on those learning remotely to make sure that they were well and completing their work. Leaders followed up to provide help and support where needed.
- The governing body has an accurate view of how effective the school is. Governors have challenged and supported leaders' work to develop the curriculum and to provide education in the current circumstances. They have checked on how well leaders have kept pupils and staff safe. The governing body has continued to check on staff well-being and workload throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The trust has helped leaders to develop their curriculum. It has provided extra devices so pupils learning remotely can access their lessons. The trust has also helped leaders to identify and reduce the risks of COVID-19. Leaders are highly positive about the support that they have received from the trust.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, the assistant headteacher, two representatives of the multi-academy trust, and those responsible for governance to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also met with a group of staff, listened to pupils read to adults in school and looked at examples of remote learning. We spoke to the leaders responsible for the curriculum, reading and SEND. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including three free-text responses, and 11 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the Wickersley Partnership Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Rotherham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Vic Wilkinson
Her Majesty's Inspector