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Katherine Martindill
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Dear Miss Martindill

Additional monitoring inspection of Creswick Primary and Nursery School

Following my inspection with Cindy Impey, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 16 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.

The inspection took place because the school has received a judgement of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspection. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in May 2019.

This monitoring inspection was an on-site visit because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about the effectiveness of the arrangements for safeguarding, and the quality of leadership and management at the school.

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.

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and those responsible for governance should take further action to:

- develop the skills of new subject leaders to carry out their roles effectively in evaluating the impact of the school's curriculum plans on pupils' learning
- ensure that leaders of foundation subjects identify the essential knowledge that pupils need to know so that over time pupils remember what they have been taught and build their understanding in these subjects.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, two teachers have left the school and new appointments have been made. For one of these posts, the role is shared between a senior leader and a long-term supply teacher.
- There has been a change in the governing body. There is a new chair of the governing body and six new governors have been appointed to replace those who have left.
- At the start of the spring term 2021, approximately three quarters of pupils were educated at home when schools were only open to some children due to COVID-19 restrictions. The proportion of vulnerable pupils who received education on the school site was a third. Two thirds of pupils with education, health and care plans attended school during this time.
- At the time of this inspection, the proportion of pupils attending school was 97%.

Main findings

- Leaders have ensured that pupils have received an education whether learning at home or attending school during this current period. They have regularly reviewed what pupils have been learning. As a result, teachers have adapted their approaches so that pupils have been able to study the broad curriculum.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have redesigned the school's curriculum to focus on ensuring that pupils are taught the things that they need to know in the right order. Plans have been produced for every subject. However, the COVID-19 restrictions have hampered the pace of checking how teachers implement the planned curriculum. Some subject leaders are new to their role. They have not received the training they need to evaluate effectively whether leaders' plans are successful.
- During the third national lockdown, leaders chose to make some changes to their curriculum plans. They have identified the parts of the curriculum that pupils have missed through these changes. In English and mathematics, this information is precise and is supporting teachers to plan lessons. However, in

foundation subjects, leaders have not identified essential knowledge that pupils need to know. Teachers are not planning precisely how they will support pupils to get back on track with their learning.

- Leaders have focused on improving the teaching of reading across the school. Staff training is helping them to deliver effective phonics sessions. Leaders have assessed the current phonic knowledge of children and pupils in the early years and Year 1. Interventions and additional support are in place. These are to help those pupils who struggle with their reading to catch up quickly.
- Pupils have opportunities to read high-quality texts to develop their vocabulary and increase their knowledge across subjects. Leaders have continued to promote a love of reading throughout the third national lockdown, such as organising remote events that were led by a poet and an author. Pupils say that they enjoy reading. They value the books they can select from the school library.
- The inclusion needs coordinator (INCo) has developed effective systems for identifying the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff receive training to ensure that appropriate support is provided for pupils. The INCo works with teachers to help them adapt their plans for learning. This is to help pupils with SEND meet the challenges of the planned curriculum. During the third national lockdown, the INCo maintained effective contact with parents and pupils who were learning remotely. This ensured that pupils with SEND continued to receive the help that they need.
- Governors have an insightful understanding of the work of school leaders. Despite experiencing a turnover of members, governors have maintained a range of expertise and experience. This ensures that school leaders are held to account. Governor visits continue, many held remotely. They are used effectively to question leaders about their decisions regarding the curriculum. Governors place a high priority on safeguarding. The checks they carry out ensure that policies and procedures are followed that help to keep pupils safe.
- The local authority is now providing a higher level of engagement with the school. Local authority advisers have helped school leaders to develop their curriculum plans and provision. Regular progress meetings check the actions leaders are taking to help the school to improve.
- Leaders and staff at all levels work hard to ensure that pupils feel safe at school. Staff have been trained to recognise possible signs of abuse and neglect. They record their concerns quickly and in detail. Leaders take prompt action when necessary to protect pupils. They work closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils and families receive the help they need. Leaders are tenacious in pursuing support for vulnerable pupils so that it is

provided in a timely manner. All necessary checks are carried out before anyone is allowed to work with pupils in the school.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted on site owing to the concerns of her Majesty's Chief Inspector about the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements. We spoke to you and other senior leaders, staff, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown and to review the school's safeguarding procedures.

We also scrutinised curriculum plans, the school's website and resources provided for remote education. We reviewed the single central record, behaviour and bullying information, and the school's safeguarding information. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 55 free-text responses, and 43 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 Hertfordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Steve Mellors
Her Majesty's Inspector