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Lisa Jackson-Ward
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Dear Mrs Jackson-Ward

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Ripley Endowed Church of England Primary School

Following my inspection with Alex Thorp, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 24 and 25 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.

The inspection took place because the school has received three successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in November 2019.

Following changes to government guidance and the imposition of COVID-19 (coronavirus) lockdown restrictions, this monitoring inspection was initially carried out remotely but moved to an on-site visit due to significant concerns about safeguarding.

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.

Safeguarding is not effective.

Under normal circumstances, we would treat this inspection as an inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005, due to the serious concerns identified. However, because routine inspections are suspended, we will prioritise the school for a section 5 inspection when routine inspections resume.

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

- ensure that suitable systems are in place to check on the safety of vulnerable pupils when they do not attend school or participate in remote education
- ensure that those responsible for the leadership of safeguarding have the knowledge and understanding to carry out their role effectively
- ensure that safeguarding files include an accurate and up-to-date record of actions taken by the school to support pupils and their families
- ensure that all relevant checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are carried out in line with statutory guidance
- provide early readers who are being educated remotely with reading materials that match the sounds that they have been taught and opportunities to read to an adult.

Context

- Since the last section 5 inspection in November 2019, two new Year 3/4 teachers have been appointed. A new school administrator has also been appointed. Two new co-chairs of the governing body and two other governors have joined the governing body.
- During the autumn term, no pupils were educated remotely.
- At the time of this inspection, approximately 15% of pupils were being educated on site. Approximately 50% of vulnerable pupils were being educated on site. Some of these pupils are attending on a part-time basis.

Main findings

- Senior leaders and governors have not ensured that the school's safeguarding arrangements are effective. Those responsible for the leadership of safeguarding do not have the knowledge, understanding and confidence to carry out their role effectively. Adults' understanding of the local safeguarding risks, such as county lines, varies. Statutory checks on the suitability of adults to work in school, such as governors, have not been carried out properly. This means that leaders cannot be sure that adults are safe to work with pupils.

- Welfare checks on vulnerable pupils who are not attending school are not rigorous. A few vulnerable pupils had not been contacted by the school for some time and consequently leaders could not be sure that pupils were safe. Pupils' records do not accurately reflect the actions taken by adults to support vulnerable pupils and the impact of these actions.
- Despite these shortcomings in safeguarding arrangements, pupils who made their views known to inspectors say they feel safe in school. Parents who responded to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, say that their child feels safe in school.
- Leaders and governors are ensuring that pupils continue to receive an education in the current circumstances. Teachers deliver 'live' lessons in English and mathematics and some other subjects. Pupils on site, and those learning remotely, are following the same range of subjects. They have access to the same live lessons and resources.
- Live lessons are led by teachers who are working remotely. Teaching assistants support those pupils who are working on site. Teaching assistants have limited opportunities to discuss with the class teacher what is being taught in live lessons. This makes it more challenging for teaching assistants to anticipate the support that vulnerable pupils might need.
- Teachers continue to provide feedback to pupils so that they can improve their work. Teachers check pupils' understanding through online quizzes. Pupils receive extra support online in small groups and individually, if required.
- Parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, are positive about the education the school is providing in the current circumstances. Staff feel well supported. Leaders and governors are considerate of staff's workload.
- Prior to the pandemic, curriculum leaders reviewed the school's curriculum plans. Leaders have more clearly defined the important knowledge that pupils must learn in each subject. In some subjects, teachers have made adaptations to the curriculum so that it can be taught both in school and remotely. For instance, in physical education (PE), pupils are accessing skills-based PE videos online. However, these videos are not matched to the school's usual PE curriculum. You are concerned about pupils' stamina for writing and intend to make this a focus of teaching when current restrictions end.
- Younger pupils continue to receive daily phonics teaching. Children in Reception have access to published online phonics lessons while children in Years 1 and 2 receive live phonics teaching. Some pupils in key stage 2, are receiving extra phonics support. Daily story time continues for younger pupils.

However, leaders have not ensured that pupils at home have access to books that match the sounds that they have been taught. The online reading programme that the school is trialling does not match the school's phonics programme. Pupils who access education remotely do not have the opportunity to read to an adult from school.

- Teachers are providing additional resources to support pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities who are not in school. Extra support for parents of those pupils being educated remotely is provided by the special education needs coordinator. Parents who responded to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, are positive about this support. Speech and language sessions continue remotely for those pupils who need them.
- The school has received some support and challenge from the local authority. The local authority is helping some curriculum leaders to improve how they check on the implementation of the school's curriculum.

Evidence

This inspection was initially conducted remotely but moved on site due to concerns about safeguarding.

During the inspection, we spoke to you and other senior leaders, including the designated safeguarding leader. We met with one of the co-chairs of the governing body, three governors and the school administrator. We also spoke to representatives from the local authority and the diocese. We spoke to a group of teachers and teaching assistants. We held discussions with pupils. We reviewed examples of pupils' remote education work. One of us listened to some pupils read.

We reviewed a range of the school's documentation relating to safeguarding. We considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 18 free-text responses, and 10 staff questionnaires.

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

Yours sincerely

Michele Costello
Her Majesty's Inspector