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Kyra Jones
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Dear Mrs Jones

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Newall Green High School

Following my remote inspection with John Donald, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 23 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 March 2018.

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:

- ensure that the weakest readers receive appropriate support with their phonic knowledge so that they can read with fluency and accuracy.

Context

- The school is due to close on 31 August 2021. This has led to the departure of 72 staff. In September 2020, four teachers joined from another school in the Prospere Learning Trust on a part-time basis to teach music, history, drama and food technology. One governor left the school.
- Almost all pupils were educated at home when the school was closed to most pupils at the start of the spring term 2021. No vulnerable pupils or pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) were attending on site.
- At the time of this inspection, over nine in every 10 pupils were attending on site. A small number of pupils were self-isolating and continuing their education remotely.

Main findings

- Although Newall Green High School is due to close at the end of the summer term, you and those responsible for governance have continued to make pupils' education a high priority. For example, you and trust leaders have taken the necessary steps to ensure that pupils are taught by subject-specialist teachers. This has benefited pupils' ongoing education, whether they have been learning from home or in school.
- In the autumn term 2020, teachers and pupils received extensive training on the school's remote education systems. Leaders provided all pupils with suitable electronic devices. Therefore, pupils could access the school's well-planned curriculum when working remotely in the spring term 2021. You and the school's leaders have taken the necessary action to ensure that pupils continue to receive an education amidst the current challenges.
- In the summer term 2020, subject leaders developed new curriculum plans. These plans prioritised the most important knowledge that pupils needed to know and remember. In the current academic year, teachers have carefully adapted the curriculum to cover the important knowledge that pupils have missed or forgotten. For example, in science pupils are doing practical experiments now that they have returned to school.
- Teachers have a range of effective strategies to check what pupils have learned since March 2020. This includes regular checks in lessons and more formal assessments. Teachers use this information to make appropriate changes to curriculum plans. For example, in mathematics and science, teachers revisit prior learning regularly. Teachers provide appropriate support

for pupils who need extra help to catch up with missed learning. Pupils value the support that they receive from their teachers.

- Teachers have a range of appropriate strategies in place to improve pupils' use of vocabulary across the curriculum. Pupils benefit from opportunities to read regularly. This is strengthening pupils' range and use of vocabulary. Staff provide some helpful support for pupils who struggle with their reading comprehension. However, leaders do not have a strategy in place to improve the weakest readers' phonic knowledge.
- Pupils profit from comprehensive guidance to prepare them for the next stage of education, employment or training. This includes impartial support from a careers adviser. Consequently, pupils are confident about their post-16 choices and future destinations. Teachers in English have helped pupils to be well prepared for college interviews.
- Since the wider reopening of schools in March 2021, leaders have maintained appropriate systems to deliver remote education to pupils who are self-isolating. Teachers have developed effective systems to check the work that these pupils produce. They continue to provide pupils with feedback when they are learning from home. Leaders and teachers keep a close eye on the welfare of those pupils currently working from home.
- During the partial school closures, staff communicated regularly with parents and carers, including the parents of vulnerable pupils. Staff used information from these conversations to provide vulnerable pupils with additional well-being support. For example, some pupils benefited from resilience sessions and meetings with the school nurse.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) meets teaching assistants regularly to check that pupils with SEND receive targeted support. The SENCo ensures that teachers know how to meet the needs of these pupils, including when they have to work from home. Teachers use this information to make appropriate adaptations to the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils with SEND.
- Throughout the pandemic, governors have continued to fulfil their core purpose. This has included supporting, challenging and holding you and other leaders to account. Governors know the school well. They meet with leaders regularly and ask challenging questions about your work to provide education in the current circumstances. Governors have kept a close eye on leaders' work to develop the curriculum.
- Senior leaders and subject leaders have received extensive support from the Prospere Learning Trust. This has helped to develop subject leaders' curriculum expertise. The local authority is providing challenge and support

for you and other school leaders. This has helped to improve how leaders support vulnerable pupils and pupils with SEND.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We met with you, the executive headteacher, other senior leaders, a group of subject leaders and teachers, and a group of pupils. We also met with the chair of the trustees and representatives from the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We reviewed minutes of the school improvement board meetings, examples of the school's curriculum plans and examples of pupils' work. We examined 18 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. This included the 18 free-text responses. We also reviewed the 17 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

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

Yours sincerely

Linda Emmett
Her Majesty's Inspector