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Lisa Sharman
Principal
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Dear Mrs Sharman

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Offa's Mead Academy

Following my remote inspection 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 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 December 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:

- develop curriculum plans in all subjects that make clear how pupils will build on what they have learned before and prepare them for what will come next
- enable curriculum leaders to understand the impact of their actions and use assessments of pupils to develop appropriate future plans.

Context

- At the start of the spring term 2021, approximately 75% of pupils were educated at home. The majority of vulnerable pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), attended on site. All pupils with education, health and care plans were offered a place at school. Where they did not attend in person, appropriate support was put in place.
- At the time of this inspection, most pupils were being educated at school. There were a few pupils who were not in school because they were required to complete a period of self-isolation.

Main findings

- Staff are working well to welcome all pupils back. You are focusing on meeting pupils' well-being needs now they are back in class. This emphasis on well-being has been a continued focus throughout the pandemic.
- Leaders have learned lessons over the last 12 months. They have made adjustments in order to deliver effective education under the current circumstances. To support this, the trust has been instrumental in ensuring that pupils have access to computers and other technical equipment. Over time, both pupils and staff have become increasingly adept in using this technology to support learning.
- Since the last monitoring visit, leaders have taken stock of where they are in providing a broad and balanced curriculum. They have taken the necessary actions so that pupils are now studying all subjects of the national curriculum. Your initial steps have been successful in building teachers' knowledge and expertise.
- Subject leaders are gaining confidence in their roles to be more effective. However, some subjects are further developed than others, such as mathematics.
- Subject leaders are using plans from the trust to help deliver the curriculum in some subjects. However, they do not always have a deep enough

understanding of these plans to ensure that all pupils can achieve as well as they reasonably could.

- Leaders understand that the pandemic has made the gaps in pupils' knowledge that already existed worse. Leaders are checking where these gaps are. They are taking the right actions to remedy this situation. Nonetheless, subject leaders are not able to explain how they use assessments of pupils' knowledge to plan the next steps in the curriculum.
- Leaders have continued to develop their work to support pupils in the early stages of reading. Staff training has supported teachers to follow the well-structured phonics programme, beginning in Reception. Pupils read regularly. The library has been redeveloped and restocked so that pupils have a greater range of books to choose from. As a result, pupils have more opportunities and are keen to read.
- Leaders are conscientious in supporting vulnerable pupils, including those with SEND. For example, leaders have been particularly proactive in supporting pupils' preparation for the transition to secondary school. Staff have been deployed specifically to support pupils who have been learning at home. This has been beneficial to pupils' academic progress and their well-being. Leaders have continued to work well with external agencies that provide specialist support for pupils, including the well-established links with the army welfare officer.
- The support and challenge provided by the trust and the local governing body are well planned. In addition to the timely support the trust has provided in handling the pandemic, the focus has remained on the key improvement priorities. This has meant that leaders are not overwhelmed. This reflects the consideration given by trust leaders and governors to staff well-being and workload.
- The trust provides support to help leaders meet the current challenges. For example, senior leaders benefit from the advice of other headteachers within the trust. Leaders maintain effective partnerships with other primary schools to discuss local issues. This is helping the school to improve.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. I spoke to you, other senior leaders, staff from the multi-academy trust, the chair of governors and subject leaders to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown. In addition, I spoke with the consultant headteacher working with the school and a headteacher who is providing other support for leaders.

I also reviewed school policies and other documentation. I looked at examples of pupils' work and sampled some teaching sessions that had been recorded. I looked

at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including eight free-text responses, and 10 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Academies Enterprise Trust (AET) multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Gloucestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sarah McGinnis
Her Majesty's Inspector