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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Helen Roderick
Headteacher
Hillbourne Primary School
Kitchener Crescent
Poole
Dorset
BH17 7HX

Dear Ms Roderick

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Hillbourne Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Marie Thomas, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 3 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 September 2019.

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.

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

- identify precisely the most appropriate support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) when the school reopens to all pupils
- ensure teachers use assessment information fully to adapt the curriculum to better meet all pupils' needs.

Context

- There is a new chair and vice-chair of the governing body, who have been in post since December 2020.
- In the autumn term 2020, approximately 40% of pupils were educated remotely at some time. Most pupils were off school for a short time, due to self-isolation or showing symptoms of COVID-19. The school had to close one 'bubble' of pupils following a positive test result for COVID-19.
- At the time of this inspection, approximately 25% of pupils were attending school. This included approximately 40% of pupils with SEND and 67% of pupils with an education, health and care plan. Approximately 75% of vulnerable pupils were in attendance.
- Two members of staff were shielding at home at the time of this inspection.

Main findings

- You and your leadership team are providing an effective education for pupils, whether they are learning remotely or in school. This includes providing electronic devices and/or paper copies of work for pupils who need them. Despite your efforts, pupils' engagement with remote education has varied widely. Where engagement is particularly low, you keep in close contact with these pupils and their families to ensure they are safe and well.
- The current curriculum mirrors the school's normal curriculum. Daily lessons in English, including phonics, and mathematics are a priority. Pupils are also supported by daily 'drop-in' sessions where they can get help and guidance directly from their class teacher. A range of other subjects, such as music and French, are taught throughout the week. You have rearranged the order of some topics so that teachers can deliver practical learning in subjects such as physical education and science when the school reopens to all pupils.
- You have a wealth of assessment information from your work in the autumn term. This information details what pupils know, can do, and understand. Your analysis shows that some pupils have developed gaps in their knowledge following significant disruption to their education. Such gaps mean that these pupils are finding it difficult to keep pace with the learning that is expected

across the curriculum in its current form. As a result, you have identified where and how to adapt the curriculum more precisely so that it better meets pupils' needs when all return to school.

- Phonics correctly remains a key priority. Staff continue to teach the phonics programme through daily live lessons. Teachers have identified that some pupils have difficulty with reading due to pre-existing gaps in their knowledge and/or low engagement with remote education. Although staff are providing extra help to secure the necessary gains in reading, it remains a challenge for some pupils. In such cases, pupils struggle to consistently recognise sounds that they have recently been taught. Leaders have appropriate plans in place for further phonics catch-up.
- Staff teach some subjects through cross-curricular topics. However, the constraints of the third national lockdown for subjects such as science mean that teachers will need to adapt curriculum content and the order it is taught when pupils return. Curriculum leaders are carefully adapting future curriculum plans to accommodate these changes.
- Staff continue to provide support, including specialist speech and language support, for pupils with SEND. Most pupils regularly access this support. Leaders acknowledge that a small number of pupils with SEND who are educated remotely are not yet fully accessing all support. Leaders continue to contact families to ensure that access to learning is maintained as well to encourage these pupils to return to school where appropriate. Leaders are working with teachers so that clear plans are in place to accurately identify pupils' specific needs and better target individualised support.
- You meet weekly with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body to discuss safeguarding and how well pupils, including vulnerable pupils and pupils with SEND, are engaging with education in the current circumstances. Governors use this information to see how well pupils are keeping up with the school's curriculum and to hold leaders to account for the progress pupils make.
- A school improvement adviser from the local authority has arranged expert advice from a national leader of governance for the newly appointed leaders of the governing body. She has also helped the school to acquire electronic devices and food vouchers for families that need them in the current circumstances.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, pupils, representatives of those responsible for governance and a representative of the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also listened to pupils read. We looked at a sample of curriculum plans, activities provided for pupils and a sample of pupils' work. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 16 free-text responses, and 25 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 Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Nathan Kemp
Her Majesty's Inspector