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Dear Ms Moore

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Wodensborough Ormiston Academy

Following my remote inspection with Chris Stevens, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 25 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 February 2019.

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:

- continue to develop curriculum plans so that they set out in detail the key knowledge that pupils should know and remember for each year group in each subject
- further develop governors' knowledge of the school curriculum so that they can sharply scrutinise leaders' actions.

Context

- Since the previous section 5 inspection, there have been several changes in staff. Two new assistant principals, and new heads of humanities and science have been appointed. There is also a new structure in place to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The chair of the local governing body has changed.
- Around 10% of pupils were educated on site between the start of January and 5 March 2021. Approximately, 45% of vulnerable pupils and 35% of pupils with education, health and care plans (EHCP) attended school.
- All pupils are expected to attend school. At the time of the inspection, no groups of pupils were being educated at home.
- At the time of inspection, no staff were absent due to COVID-19. However, several members of staff were either shielding or self-isolating at home. They are continuing to teach their lessons to pupils in school remotely.

Main findings

- You and your staff have refused to let the pandemic slow your work in improving the education that pupils receive. Leaders have focused on the right things, both in response to current circumstances and in their wider work, to improve the school. Your unremitting determination to move the school forward is reflected by all staff. They share your ambition and have high expectations of all pupils. All staff have united to take effective action.
- When remote learning was happening daily, staff made sure that they stayed in touch with pupils and families. They made more than 15,000 calls to support and encourage pupils. Teachers celebrated pupils' success. As a result, engagement in remote learning rose steadily. Leaders' actions have strengthened the relationship between school, home, and the wider community. This has helped all pupils to return to school successfully.
- Leaders introduced a new curriculum as planned in September 2020. They made sure that it covers all the requirements of the national curriculum. Leaders have worked hard to ensure that it is ambitious and broad. Within subjects, leaders have carefully planned the order in which content is taught

to pupils. This means that pupils' learning builds on what they already know. Leaders acknowledge that while the 'big questions' are in place in these plans, the finer detail which sets out exactly what pupils need to know and remember requires further work. This work is in progress.

- As all pupils returned, leaders identified the important knowledge pupils should have learnt remotely. They worked closely with teachers to plan activities for pupils to check this learning. Teachers and leaders use the information from these checks well. For instance, they meet weekly to discuss how they can use this information to adapt curriculum plans to pick up on gaps in pupils' learning. Senior leaders have prioritised this meeting time, recognising its importance. Teachers value this. They use this time wisely to share ideas and plan together. This is helping pupils learn.
- Leaders prioritise reading. They want all pupils to be able to read confidently and fluently. During the latest lockdown, well-trained adults continued to support pupils well who needed help to read. As all pupils returned, leaders checked carefully to identify any other pupil who needed extra help. As a result of this support, pupils are becoming better readers. This means that they can learn well in all of their lessons.
- Leaders support pupils with the most complex needs well. For example, leaders were aware that some pupils had worries about returning to school. They took steps to support these pupils. These were successful. Leaders are strengthening the provision further for pupils with SEND. Staff's continued efforts to develop the inclusive ethos of the school shine through. Leaders have improved systems for identifying pupils who need extra help. These include pupils who need support to improve their behaviour. Consequently, more pupils get the help they need sooner rather than later.
- Leaders have ensured that Year 11 pupils have the information they need to make informed choices about their future, for example, through the 'smart start' tutorial programme and an online careers classroom. Leaders are mindful of the additional pressure on Year 11 pupils. Pupils value the care that staff have shown them. This is also the case for students attending the school sixth form, 'WOA6'. Pupils told inspectors that staff have communicated clearly with them throughout the pandemic.
- The local governing body and the multi-academy trust (MAT) are ambitious for pupils. They question what leaders tell them and challenge this robustly. They know they need to deepen their knowledge of the work leaders have done to improve the curriculum.
- The MAT provides effective support in the current circumstances. This ranges from practical support on issues, such as risk assessments, to the continued professional development of staff. Leaders use the network of professionals in

the MAT well. As a result, leaders continue to improve the curriculum as well as respond to the pandemic.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, senior, pastoral, and subject leaders, teachers, the special educational needs coordinator, pupils, governors, and a representative of the MAT to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We scrutinised minutes from governors' meetings. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 20 free-text responses, and 87 staff questionnaires.

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

Yours sincerely

Ian Tustian
Her Majesty's Inspector