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Mrs Michelle Mannion-Parkes
Headteacher
The Brookfield School
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Herefordshire
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Dear Mrs Mannion-Parkes

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of The Brookfield School

Following my remote inspection with Lesley Yates, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), 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 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 December 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:

- ensure that the new curriculum is fully implemented, and its impact evaluated
- strengthen the educational knowledge and expertise of trustees so that they can evaluate the quality of education provided to pupils and hold leaders to account for their decisions about the curriculum.

Context

- Since the last inspection, a number of staff have left the school, including eight teachers, the school's business manager, the special educational needs coordinator and the senior lead for safeguarding. Three teaching assistants have also left. A new chief finance officer has been appointed, as well as one teacher and eight teaching assistants. Leaders anticipate making further appointments once COVID-19 restrictions are eased, including a deputy headteacher. A new board of trustees has been established.
- In January 2021, 30% of pupils were being educated on site. By the beginning of March, this number had risen to 50%.
- At the time of this inspection, almost all pupils were being educated onsite. A small number of pupils are in the process of moving from part-time to full-time attendance.

Main findings

- Since the last inspection, you and the trustees have rightly prioritised safeguarding, behaviour management and curriculum development as priority areas for improvement. Parents and staff spoke positively about the changes that have taken place in the school.
- You have worked with staff to rewrite the school's curriculum. You have focused on what you want pupils to achieve by the time they leave school, intent on preparing pupils for adulthood. You want to ensure that pupils have the right knowledge and skills to enable them to move successfully back into mainstream education, but only when the time is right. You know that the curriculum is a work in progress. COVID-19 restrictions have meant that you have not been able to implement and evaluate the new curriculum fully.
- Pupils have a wide range of social, emotional and mental health needs, and associated difficulties. Most pupils access a 'mainstream' curriculum, while others need a more bespoke offer. You have had to make some adjustments to the curriculum due to COVID-19, and practical subjects, such as physical education, have been affected most. Pupils have had limited opportunities to apply their learning in the community. You have plans in place to address this once local restrictions are lifted. While pupils have now returned to school,

staff continue to prepare work for remote education in the event of pupils having to isolate in the future.

- The school's approach to assessment is based on what individual pupils know and can do. You have seen that some pupils have benefited from the blended learning approach you used for pupils who did not attend school during the COVID-19 restrictions. However, you know that some pupils, whose attendance at school was limited, have fallen behind. You are using assessment information to focus additional help for these pupils.
- You have ensured that reading now has a high priority within the school. Pupils at an early stage of reading engage in daily phonics sessions and take-home books matched to their phonics ability. Pupils who need it are getting additional help to catch up. All pupils have a daily reading and literacy session. Pupils are being exposed to a variety of texts. You and staff are promoting a love of reading throughout the school.
- You have noticed that pupils in Year 11 are feeling less motivated to work because external examinations are no longer taking place this summer. You are ensuring that these pupils are being given additional support for their well-being during this period of transition. Pupils have regular contact with a careers adviser. As a result, all pupils in Year 11 have an identified post-16 destination for September 2021.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan and you have ensured that they continue to receive the support they require. Pupils are receiving support from a range of external agencies, such as the youth offending team. Your personal, social and health education curriculum focuses on developing pupils' life skills, helping pupils to learn to integrate with citizens in the local community.
- The new board of trustees have acted swiftly to ensure improvements to the school since the last inspection. The chair of trustees has a good understanding of the challenges the school faces, as well as recognising the significant improvements made in the last year. While members have a broad set of relevant skills, the board lacks a member with educational expertise. Trustees are currently reliant on the school's improvement partner (SIP) to provide educational information and guidance. Discussions about education are not yet formalised.
- The SIP continues to provide challenge and support to you and senior leaders. He has provided professional development and guidance to staff in developing the new curriculum and roles of subject leaders. Due to COVID-19, he can give only a limited assurance about the new curriculum because he has not been able to check how well it has been implemented.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you and senior leaders, some staff, parents and pupils, the chair of trustees and the school's improvement partner to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also listened to some pupils read, scrutinised trust board minutes and looked at information about remote education and the curriculum. We looked at 19 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including nine free-text responses, and 30 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of directors, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Herefordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Deb Jenkins
Her Majesty's Inspector