

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



25 March 2021

Joanne Banks  
Headteacher  
Flash Ley Primary School  
Hawksmoor Road  
Stafford  
Staffordshire  
ST17 9DR

Dear Mrs Banks

### **Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Flash Ley Primary School**

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

Following changes to government guidance and the imposition of COVID-19 (coronavirus) lockdown restrictions, 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 three successive judgements of requires improvement. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in June 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:

- develop the curriculum in the remaining foundation subjects so that pupils' knowledge, skills and subject-specific vocabulary build over time
- ensure governors fully understand the school's curriculum and know how the quality of education being provided is monitored.

### **Context**

- Since the previous inspection, the following staff have been appointed: the early years/key stage 1 leader, the special educational needs coordinator and the office manager.
- During autumn 2020, about a quarter of pupils received remote education at some point in the term.
- At the time of this inspection, two fifths of pupils were being educated in school. Four fifths of pupils identified as being vulnerable, and just under a half of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), were attending school.

### **Main findings**

- Before the pandemic, leaders had revised curriculum plans so that the sequence of learning was mapped out in more detail. These improvements span most subjects. Some subject planning such as English, mathematics and science is further ahead. Other subjects, including history and computing, have been mapped out during the pandemic. However, a few remaining subjects still need further development.
- A structured approach to curriculum planning has helped staff to plan remote education. Currently, whether at home or in school, pupils are studying all their usual subjects. In most cases, teachers follow existing curriculum plans. Some content has been reordered to make activities more manageable at home. In art, and design and technology, lessons are very different to usual. This is due to families not having the necessary resources at home. In both subjects, staff have created new activities to keep pupils interested and engaged.
- Leaders have thought carefully about managing the learning of pupils being taught in school and at home. The arrangements in place allow pupils to move seamlessly between being educated in school and remotely if needed, such as children of part-time key workers. The school's remote offer includes a mix of recorded lessons, videos and other activities. Not all activities take place on computers and many pupils use pencil and paper methods to access learning and record their ideas. Leaders have listened to families about what is working well for them.

- Leaders monitor pupils' engagement with remote learning. If a pupil is not taking part, then staff email or telephone home to find out why, and to offer support. When necessary, pupils who find it hard to work at home are asked to come into school. Staff keep in contact with professional services, such as social services, as part of their checks on pupils' welfare.
- The school's online platform allows pupils to access work at their level. Pupils with SEND or those who need extra guidance benefit from the bespoke resources provided. Pupils who speak English as an additional language have their learning materials adapted for them. Work for these pupils includes carefully chosen language so pupils can understand. Regular contact with pupils and their families helps to keep extra support targeted at the right things.
- The school has a structured phonics programme and daily routines for teaching reading. Staff have made e-books available to pupils at home and provide phonically decodable books. Teachers provide extra reading support, if needed, for vulnerable pupils who are taught in school. There is a consistent approach to the teaching of reading in all year groups.
- Leaders have prioritised pupils' mental health and well-being. Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe and how to manage their feelings as part of the curriculum. A range of enrichment activities are available for pupils, some taking place in school and others remotely. These include yoga, steel pans, singing and taking part in the RSPB's bird watch.
- Governors receive regular information from school leaders about the work of the school. However, governors are not suitably knowledgeable about the school's current curriculum offer. They are not clear about which subjects are being developed and which need further work. Governors could not explain how the curriculum is monitored. Nor could they articulate the impact of recent developments.
- External support, brokered through the local authority, is helping the school move forwards. The school is receiving support from a teaching school and some other advisers. The school's improvement partner reports that the school is prioritising the right things at this time. He is aware some aspects of the curriculum still need further work.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, the chair and vice-chair of governors and the school's improvement partner from the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also looked at remote education resources, examples of pupils' work and information on the school's website. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 17 free-text responses, and 22 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 Staffordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Heather Phillips  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**