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Shelly Reeves-Walters  
Headteacher  
Far Forest Lea Memorial C of E Primary School  
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Far Forest  
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DY14 9TQ

Dear Mrs Reeves-Walters

**Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Far Forest Lea Memorial C of E Primary School**

Following my remote inspection with Peter Humphries, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 18 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 May 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:

- check and evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum delivery, especially in the foundation subjects, so that pupils can build on what they know and remember.

### **Context**

- You were appointed as the executive headteacher in September 2019. Since then, an early years foundation stage leader has been appointed and the leadership of subjects has been restructured. Since September 2019, after a period of instability, staffing is now more settled.
- Between the start of term and 5 March 2021, 30% of pupils were educated on site. Approximately 63% of vulnerable pupils and 100% of pupils with education, health and care plans attended over this period.
- At the time of this inspection, almost all pupils were attending on site.

### **Main findings**

- Since reopening to all pupils on 8 March 2021, you and your staff have taken a measured approach to delivering the curriculum. Your priority has been to settle pupils back into school routines and to develop their learning stamina and resilience. This week pupils resumed learning in reading, writing and mathematics. There continues to be a focus on personal, social, health and economic education across the curriculum. This was exemplified in a physical education lesson, where the main focus was on re-establishing pupils' teamwork skills.
- School leaders have high expectations and ambition for their pupils. When you first started, you rightly focused on ensuring consistency in the quality of teaching, especially in the core subjects of English and mathematics. As a result, you have seen improvements in pupils' fluency and accuracy in reading, phonics skills and writing. Subject leaders have been at the forefront of these developments. They feel more confident in evaluating their subjects and identifying what needs to improve because of the effective support and training they have completed. However, leaders know there is still work to do to check and evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum, especially in the foundation subjects.
- Teachers use a range of assessment strategies to check what pupils have learned and remembered from their lessons this term. They use this information to make appropriate adaptations to the curriculum. Teachers are aware that some pupils have gaps in their learning. They have ensured that support is in place for those pupils who need additional help.

- A lot of work has been done to develop reading across the school, including through remote learning. There is a very clear process in place for the teaching of phonics. All pupils, including those who were learning at home, were able to get the support they needed through small-group or one-to-one sessions, carried out in school or remotely. Leaders identified that fluency and remembering new sounds were issues for pupils in the early stages of reading. Pupils are now given enough time to consolidate new sounds, which is having a positive impact on their reading skills. They have returned to school with a greater fluency and confidence due to this approach being in place.
- Pupils are passionate about reading. They talk positively about the opportunities they have to read widely and often, and about how staff actively promoted reading throughout the third national lockdown. Pupils confidently discuss the different genres and challenging texts they have been reading.
- Leaders have plans in place to deliver the curriculum remotely should a class or year-group 'bubble' close or pupils need to self-isolate. If a bubble closes, the school will follow its usual curriculum and move to remote learning, including live lessons. Those pupils who self-isolate will access learning that aligns to that in school. Those pupils who continue to need additional support will receive this remotely.
- Leaders support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively. Teachers check what pupils know and remember from what has been taught. Tasks are then adapted for pupils as needed. This was also the case during the recent lockdown. Teachers planned and delivered learning that was adapted for pupils with SEND. Pupils who needed additional support were given bespoke sessions, both in school and remotely, to check understanding and to address any misconceptions.
- Governors show a clear and focused determination for the school to improve. They challenge and support leaders well. Governors have a range of suitable systems and processes to check on the effectiveness of leaders' actions, including in relation to the pandemic and national restrictions.
- The local authority has worked closely with the school to provide effective support. Staff have positively engaged with training for subject leaders. Consequently, staff are becoming more confident in their ability to make checks in their subject. However, there is still work to do, especially in the foundation subjects. Staff from an external multi-academy trust and the Diocese of Worcester provide effective support, for example through advice and guidance to teachers and leaders. The school's staff say that this support has been valuable in helping them improve and develop their teaching skills.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other leaders, teaching staff and pupils. We also spoke to representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors and a local authority school improvement partner to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also looked at governors' minutes of meetings, information on the school's website and observed pupils reading to an adult. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 11 free-text responses, and eight staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Worcester, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Worcestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Eve Morris  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**