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Morgan Thomas
Principal
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Dear Mr Thomas

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of The Littlehampton Academy

Following my remote inspection with Aimee Floyd, 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 April 2018.

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:

- develop and embed improvements to the planning in all subjects so pupils achieve well.

Context

- Since the last inspection, there have been some changes at senior and middle leadership level. A number of teachers have left and new teachers have been appointed. Four academy councillors have resigned and six new councillors have been appointed.
- Approximately nine out of 10 pupils were educated at home in the spring term, before the school reopened to all pupils. Around half of vulnerable pupils and just over two thirds of pupils with an education, health and care plan were educated on site during that time.
- At the time of this inspection, the vast majority of pupils were attending on site.
- At the time of this inspection, a very small number of staff were absent due to COVID-19. Where possible, these staff were continuing to support pupils with their learning from home.

Main findings

- Since the last inspection, leaders have worked successfully to make further improvements. They are determined that pupils' learning will not be disrupted by the challenges of COVID-19. At the start of the spring term, leaders adapted the school's curriculum as well as providing live and pre-recorded lessons in all subjects. They made sure that pupils had the right technology and resources to help them learn effectively at home. Leaders have clear plans in place to continue to deliver the curriculum remotely for any pupils who are not in school.
- Leaders are ambitious about the curriculum that pupils learn. They are using the expertise within the trust to continue to develop the quality of the education that pupils receive across a range of subjects. However, leaders rightly recognise that some subjects are not as far forward with this as others. They are continuing to prioritise this area of the school's work.
- Now that all pupils have returned, the school's mantra, 'keep up, not catch up', is at the heart of curriculum planning. Teachers have diligently checked how well pupils learned the essential knowledge they were taught during the recent partial lockdown of schools. Currently, teachers are helping pupils to revise and practise this important knowledge before moving on to new learning.

- Leaders have made sure that reading remains a priority. They ensure that pupils who have fallen behind have the help and support they need to become more fluent readers. The recent lockdown paused some of this work, but it has begun again in earnest now all pupils are back in school.
- Leaders have ensured a range of well-considered strategies are in place for pupils in Year 11 and Year 13. These include carefully considered careers advice and guidance, including support with university applications. This is preparing pupils well for the next stage of their education. Pupils appreciate how hard teachers are working to help them achieve well. One student said, 'staff see us as sparks of talent who they support and nurture.'
- Leaders have high expectations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They ensure that these pupils have the same access to the curriculum as their peers. Teachers and support staff make suitable adaptations, where appropriate, so these pupils can learn successfully. The special educational needs coordinator has provided extensive training and support to staff.
- Councillors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities. They provide robust challenge and support to leaders. Councillors work well with school leaders and the trust to make sure that the quality of education continues to improve. They have adapted quickly to working virtually so they can assure themselves that leaders' actions are having the right impact on improving pupils' education.
- Over the past year, the trust's new chief executive officer has ensured that the trust is providing valuable expertise. The trust is playing a pivotal role in strengthening improvement in subjects such as mathematics and modern foreign languages. Staff have welcomed this and feel well supported.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, senior leaders, the chief executive officer and the director of school improvement from Woodard Academies Trust, pupils, staff and representatives of those responsible for governance to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also reviewed the school improvement plan, the school self-evaluation document, documentation relating to the work of the academy council and positive feedback documents from the autumn and spring terms. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 117 free-text responses, and 104 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Woodard Academies Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the

director of children's services for West Sussex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Louise Walker
Her Majesty's Inspector