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Dear Mrs Myers

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Liss Infant School

Following my remote inspection with Lucy English, 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 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:

- ensure all subject leaders have secure subject knowledge to help them plan the curriculum
- make sure all subjects have clearly sequenced plans which identify the knowledge that leaders want pupils to learn from the Reception Year onwards
- ensure that governors have the knowledge they need to hold leaders to account for the quality of the curriculum.

Context

- One assistant headteacher left the school in December 2019. A resource-based provision was opened in January 2021 for up to 10 pupils with moderate learning difficulties.
- About 60% of pupils were educated at home when the school was only open to some children due to COVID-19 restrictions earlier in the spring term. Approximately 60% of pupils who are considered vulnerable attended school on site. At the start of January 2021, 50% of pupils with education, health and care plans attended school and all of them did from the end of the month.
- At the time of this inspection, all pupils were being educated on site and none were learning remotely.

Main findings

- Leaders have successfully balanced offering remote and on-site education to pupils over the last year. In the autumn, they made sure that pupils caught up on the learning they had missed in English and mathematics during the first national lockdown. During the spring term, leaders improved the remote education offered using a mix of pre-recorded videos, paper resources and live lessons. Now the school is fully open again, they know they need to continue to develop an ambitious and well-planned curriculum.
- Following the last inspection, leaders prioritised improving English and mathematics teaching. By the start of the pandemic, leaders had created English and mathematics plans that sequence learning well across Years 1 and 2. As a result, lessons now build on what pupils have learned before. However, plans do not always link clearly with what pupils learn in the Reception Year.
- Leaders have begun to develop the wider curriculum but there is still much work to do. Only a few subjects, such as personal, social and health education, identify the knowledge leaders want pupils to learn. Some plans build on what pupils learn in the Reception Year, others do not. Subject

leaders do not all have the subject knowledge they need to help them identify what they want pupils to learn and in what order.

- Leaders are focusing effectively on getting pupils' reading back on track now they are all back in school. Despite leaders' best efforts, the pandemic delayed getting new books to the school. This meant that pupils had reduced access to books although they could access texts online. Staff are systematically checking what pupils remember from phonics lessons. Pupils can now practise the sounds they are learning because they have books that are well matched to these sounds.
- It is too early for leaders to be sure what the gaps in learning are for pupils who were learning remotely. Teachers are checking as they go along in most subjects to see what pupils know and can do independently. They have already found that fast and accurate recall in mathematics for some pupils is weaker than before the national lockdowns. Some pupils have become over reliant on adult support if they have been learning at home.
- Leaders know the needs of vulnerable pupils well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This ensured appropriate support for these pupils' learning and well-being continued while the school was only open to some children due to COVID-19 restrictions. Many of them were encouraged to attend school. Staff supported them well to work on personal targets and as a result, these pupils are more confident now the school is fully open.
- The special educational needs coordinator supports staff well. This helps staff to adapt lessons according to the needs of their pupils. Leaders have well-considered plans to integrate the pupils in the resource-based provision with their mainstream classes as soon as COVID-19 restrictions allow.
- Governors have assured themselves that leaders have been providing an education during the pandemic. This includes checking how leaders know that vulnerable pupils are safe. Governors do not yet have a secure knowledge of what a carefully planned and suitably ambitious curriculum looks like. They acknowledge the need to strengthen their understanding so that they can hold leaders to account for the quality of education.
- The local authority prioritised support for the English and mathematics curriculums after the last inspection. This has improved the quality of planning and teaching in these subjects. Advisers have very recently provided support for other subject leaders, but it is too early to say what difference this work has made.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, pupils, staff, representatives of those responsible for governance, and a

representative of the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also listened to pupils read and examined curriculum plans. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 33 free-text responses, and 10 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 Hampshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Laurie Anderson
Her Majesty's Inspector