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Rachael Williams
Executive Headteacher
Cheswardine Primary and Nursery School
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Dear Mrs Williams

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Cheswardine Primary and Nursery School

Following my remote inspection with Nicola Harwood, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 23 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 four successive judgements of requires improvement. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in September 2020.

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:

- continue to develop the skills of curriculum leaders so that they can evaluate accurately the quality of education and use this information to lead further improvements in their subjects.

Context

- The school has joined another local primary school to form the Goldstone Federation since the last inspection. The new governing body has a new chair of governors and several new members. There are also some members who were existing governors at this school. You are the executive headteacher of both schools in the federation and you were the headteacher of Cheswardine at the time of the last inspection.
- Approximately two thirds of pupils received remote education at some point between the start of the spring term and 5 March 2021. These included the small number of pupils that the school has identified as being vulnerable. Just under half of the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) continued to attend school.
- At the time of this inspection, all pupils were being educated in school.

Main findings

- You and your staff have worked hard to improve the curriculum. This work has focused on developing the sequence of learning and the essential knowledge that pupils should acquire in all subjects. Currently, subject leaders do not check how well their plans for each subject are being implemented. This limits their understanding of what they need to do next to make further improvements.
- Pupils were well prepared and supported to access education remotely. For example, aspects of the computing curriculum were prioritised so that pupils had the necessary knowledge and skills to access, complete and submit their work. Pupils said that they liked the new online learning resources in reading and mathematics. You also reordered content within subjects to ensure that what was taught remotely was not reliant on specialist equipment.
- Throughout the third national lockdown, teachers have made frequent checks to find out what aspects of learning pupils have remembered. Teachers have reviewed pupils' work and their responses to tests and quizzes in a wide range of subjects. You say that pupils have continued to make the progress you expected in most subjects, including reading and mathematics. However, teachers have identified that a high proportion of pupils have slipped behind with their writing. You have taken immediate action since pupils returned to school to address this with daily handwriting sessions and increasing the

opportunities pupils have to write in a wide range of subjects. Some pupils are also receiving additional support linked to letter formation and spelling.

- Reading is a high priority. Staff are trained well to teach phonics and they make sure that pupils can practise by reading books that contain the sounds they already know. Older pupils spoke confidently about their favourite books and authors. Your assessments show that pupils make strong progress in reading.
- Teachers have noticed that pupils are happy to be back at school. However, many pupils have struggled to get back into routines and into the habit of cooperating well with each other. As a result, you have introduced extra personal, social and health education activities with a focus on mental health, well-being and relationships. You have also introduced more physical activity sessions so that pupils can spend more time playing, sharing, and working together. As a result, although all subjects of the curriculum are being taught, the time for some has been reduced. You have firm plans to get back to a balanced curriculum in the summer term.
- The leader for special educational needs closely monitored the engagement with learning and progress of pupils with SEND during the third national lockdown. Additional specialist resources were provided to ensure that pupils who needed them were able to get on with learning. Some pupils continued to receive individual support remotely, particularly in reading. Effective additional support is in place to help pupils with SEND to build on what they already know and can do as a result of teachers' robust knowledge of how well pupils are doing.
- The governing body has a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further improvement. Governors have continued to meet regularly throughout the pandemic and have challenged leaders appropriately about the education that pupils have received and how well they have engaged with their learning. Governors provide effective support for leaders and have made sure that staff well-being is prioritised.
- The local authority knows the school well. The local authority has high expectations of you and recognises that you have continued to drive improvement throughout the pandemic. Effective support from external consultants has resulted in significant improvements to the curriculum. However, improvement work linked to the development of subject leaders has been hampered by the pandemic.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, the reading leader, 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 met with a group of pupils from key stage 2 and heard some pupils from key stage 1 read. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 17 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 Shropshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jo Evans
Her Majesty's Inspector