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Rachel Ray
Acting Headteacher
Weaverthorpe Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
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Dear Mrs Ray

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Weaverthorpe Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Gill Wild, Her Majesty's Inspector, 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 have serious weaknesses.

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 was judged to have serious weaknesses at its previous section 5 inspection. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in January 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:

- develop plans which identify and sequence the precise subject knowledge that pupils will be taught in subjects across the wider curriculum.

Context

- The headteacher and key stage 2 teacher left the school in the summer term 2020. An acting headteacher took over the leadership of the school in September 2020. A new teacher for key stage 2 joined at the same time. The previous governing body was dissolved and replaced with an interim executive board (IEB) in September 2020.
- When the school was closed to most pupils at the start of the spring term, approximately two thirds of pupils were educated remotely. Half of the pupils with an education, health and care plan and almost all of the pupils that leaders classed as vulnerable were attending school on site during this period.
- Following the period of national restrictions, all pupils have returned to school.

Main findings

- You have responded well to the challenges you have faced since taking up post in September 2020. During the autumn term 2020, leaders established the infrastructure needed to deliver education remotely. They trained staff and taught pupils how to use devices and software to support their learning. As a result of this careful planning, teachers quickly moved to delivering the curriculum remotely when the school was not open to all pupils. Leaders intend that this system of remote education will continue to be used for pupils who need to self-isolate in the future.
- Teachers have spent time settling children back into school routines since the school opened to all pupils in March 2020. Teachers have checked to see what gaps pupils have in their knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result of these checks, teachers have added extra sessions into the day to help pupils recall and remember important number facts, like times tables. Teachers are also revisiting aspects of the reading curriculum to make sure pupils have remembered what they need to know in order to move on to more challenging subject content.
- The curriculum for reading has been redesigned. Teachers have clear expectations of what pupils will learn and when. Phonics is now taught daily. All staff have received training from the local authority to improve the teaching of reading. Leaders have invested in books that help pupils develop fluency in their reading. In key stage 2, leaders have introduced a daily reading lesson where pupils study books and answer questions about their

reading. Increasingly, pupils are becoming enthusiastic about reading and are growing in confidence.

- Curriculum plans for subjects in the wider curriculum, such as geography and history, identify broad topic headings but do not detail exactly what knowledge pupils will acquire while studying the topics. Leaders have plans to review the curriculum plans for these subjects so that they clearly identify and sequence the key subject knowledge that pupils need to learn.
- Leaders and teachers know the pupils in the school really well. During the period of partial closure, staff kept in touch with all pupils. Vulnerable pupils were encouraged to attend school. Staff worked with external agencies to ensure that pupils were safe and families received the support they needed.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully included in the life of the school. Barriers to their learning are identified on individual learning plans which detail strategies to be used to support them. Teaching assistants have received training and now provide additional catch-up sessions for these pupils to help them with their learning.
- Since its inception in September 2020, members of the IEB have focused intensively on securing improvement to the education on offer for pupils and the systems to keep them safe. Members of the IEB regularly visit the school so that they can be sure that leaders' actions are improving the school. They have the knowledge they need to hold leaders to account effectively. For example, members of the IEB attended the recent phonics training so that they understood what steps teachers should be taking to support pupils with their reading.
- Since the last inspection, the local authority has worked with leaders and the IEB to improve the school. They have provided stability in leadership by brokering the support of the current acting headteacher. They have also worked with the acting headteacher to prioritise the actions needed to improve the school.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, five members of the IEB, both teachers and some pupils. We also spoke to a representative from the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also looked at some pupils' work and watched a reading catch-up session. We looked at 22 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including two free-text responses, and five staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the interim executive board, the director of education for the Diocese of York, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for North Yorkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tim Scargill-Knight
Her Majesty's Inspector