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Alison Chapman  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Chapman

### **Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Baines School**

Following my remote inspection with David Selby, 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 three successive judgements of requires improvement. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in November 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:

- develop assessment methods which will help staff to identify gaps in pupils' reading knowledge more precisely. This is so staff can target support more effectively for those pupils who find reading difficult
- embed the actions they have recently begun to take to help pupils to get back on track with their learning across all subjects.

## **Context**

- Two governors have recently left the governing body. The chair of the governing body is in the process of replacing them. There is a new subject leader and a new teacher in the business studies department. Three new members of staff in the mathematics department have been appointed. This includes an assistant subject leader and a lead teacher. Governors have also appointed a new member of staff to support the teaching of reading.
- When the school was closed to most pupils at the start of the spring term, more than nine out of 10 pupils were learning at home. About three out of 10 vulnerable pupils and about half of the pupils with education, health and care plans were attending on site.
- At the time of this inspection, almost all pupils were being educated on site. A few pupils were self-isolating because of COVID-19.

## **Main findings**

- You have been effective in ensuring that pupils had access to education during the pandemic. The curriculum plans for pupils working at home and at school closely resembled the usual curriculum. You skilfully adapted how you teach various subjects, such as music. This has given all pupils the opportunity to learn effectively.
- You have kept the school's improvement work in focus throughout the current circumstances. Before the pandemic, you and other leaders introduced new schemes of work which raised expectations for pupils' learning. For example, in mathematics, leaders redesigned the curriculum in key stage 3. This was to avoid the repetition of work done in key stage 2, which had happened in the past. You continue with this work as you and other leaders aim to be clearer about what pupils need to learn and when they will learn it.
- You and senior leaders have changed parts of the curriculum so that pupils have a firm foundation of knowledge which they can build on in the future. In history, for example, teachers in key stage 3 have prioritised work about religious differences in the 16th century, which pupils missed in the summer term last year. This is so that, at a later point, pupils will be able to study religious differences in the 17th century.

- In most subjects, staff have begun to use suitable assessment approaches to work out where the gaps are in pupils' knowledge. There is a mixture of formal testing and informal checks on what pupils can remember. Staff have started to provide pupils with work that helps them to catch up on knowledge that they have missed or forgotten. However, as the school has only recently reopened to all pupils, leaders have not fully embedded these strategies to ensure that pupils get back on track with their learning across the whole curriculum.
- You and other staff provide appropriate help for pupils who need to improve their reading, especially those in Year 7. This includes activities like one-to-one tutoring sessions. You have begun to train staff in new approaches such as revisiting phonic knowledge. These actions are enabling the weakest readers to improve their understanding and fluency. That said, the methods that staff use to identify gaps in pupils' reading are not precise enough to pinpoint the difficulties that some pupils encounter when they read.
- In key stage 4, and especially in Year 11, teachers mostly know where pupils are in their learning and are giving them appropriate support. You are providing effective extra teaching after school for Year 11 pupils in a range of subjects, such as mathematics, to help them to catch up on any weaker areas of their learning.
- You are successfully continuing to provide education to the few pupils who still have to learn at home because they are self-isolating. You are following the same approach that you used between January and March of this year. You mix online teaching with other resources, depending on each pupil's needs.
- You and other leaders have effectively helped vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) with their learning as they return to school. For example, some pupils found electronic devices useful in improving their responses in lessons when they were learning at home. You have arranged for these pupils to carry on using these devices in school. Learning support assistants use specific strategies to help pupils with SEND. These strategies are used effectively in helping these pupils to make progress in their learning.
- Governors know a great deal about leaders' work and the decisions that they make to improve pupils' education. They have kept a close eye on the way leaders have developed the curriculum to enable pupils to learn more and remember more. Governors understand how and why leaders have adapted it. Governors use their knowledge to challenge senior leaders effectively about improvements to pupils' education.
- The local authority has provided useful support to leaders in matters such as recruitment. You have received appropriate challenge and support from your

school improvement partner. Her work has contributed to the improvement in the mathematics curriculum in key stage 3, for example. Work with subject departments in other schools has also been helpful in securing improvement in the school.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, pupils, staff, representatives of those responsible for governance, a representative of the local authority, and the school's improvement adviser to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also looked at samples of curriculum documents, samples of pupils' work and minutes of governing body meetings. We looked at 44 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including free-text responses, and 55 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 Lancashire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mark Quinn  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**