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Paul Jenkins
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Dear Mr Jenkins

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Aldworth School

Following my remote inspection with Louise Walker, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 6 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 at its previous section 5 inspections. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in June 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:

- fully implement the curriculum improvements across all subjects so teachers help pupils build their knowledge over time
- prioritise improvements to the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to ensure that needs are identified understood by staff and that these needs are met
- ensure that pupils who struggle with reading get the specific support they need so that they do not fall behind in their learning.

Context

- Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes in leadership. This includes the secondment of a headteacher and deputy headteacher from another local school. This agreement is in place to support the governing body in making improvements to the school and to give time to recruit a new substantive headteacher. There have also been new appointments made to subject leadership as well as the implementation of a new system of pastoral leaders.
- Approximately nine out of 10 pupils were educated at home in the spring term before the school re-opened to all pupils. Around three quarters of vulnerable pupils and two thirds of pupils with an education, health and care plan were educated on site during this time.
- The school fully reopened to all pupils on the day before this inspection. The vast majority of pupils have returned to school. A very small number are continuing to self-isolate because of COVID-19.
- At the time of this inspection, a very small number of staff were absent due to COVID-19. Where possible, these staff are continuing to support the school from home.

Main findings

- Leaders are resolute in their drive for improvement in all areas of the school. The positive impact of this work has been recognised by pupils, parents and staff. Parents who responded to Ofsted's Parent View were very positive. One commented that staff deserve 'a huge thank you for all they have done', including the 'care, passion and hard work they have continued to provide over the last year'. The school's strong sense of community has continued to flourish during the recent period of remote education. The 'Aldworth Live' online show on Friday afternoons was welcomed by pupils and staff as a fun way to stay connected during an uncertain time.

- Work to improve the school's curriculum began in June 2020 and continued throughout this academic year. As a result, teachers are beginning to have a much clearer understanding of the purpose and content of the subjects they teach. Some of this work has been slowed by the pandemic. Leaders are aware of this and are working with teachers to establish consistency and quality across all areas of the curriculum.
- Teachers have a good understanding of those pupils who engaged well during the period of remote education and those who did not. For the rest of this term, leaders are prioritising helping pupils settle back into the routines of school. Teachers are using short quizzes and discussions in lessons to identify what pupils have learnt and remembered. Any missed learning is being thoughtfully planned into the start of the summer term. Leaders know this is particularly important in subjects such as drama, music and physical education (because pupils did not study these subjects remotely).
- A very small number of pupils are continuing to be educated remotely. Pupils at home are following the same curriculum as those in school and are getting regular help from their teachers.
- Staff are acutely aware of the concerns of their Year 11 pupils. The return to school has been handled sensitively, with well-being support provided when needed. Teachers are building upon the positive engagement during the period of remote education to identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge. Plans are in place to revisit this learning during the early part of the summer term, in readiness for final assessment.
- Leaders agreed with inspectors that making improvements for the provision of pupils with SEND must be one of the school's urgent priorities. There is a great deal of pastoral care in place for these pupils, including support for their well-being. However, leaders have not ensured that the same amount of attention has been given to their learning. Improvements to the identification of needs, as well as staff training and the deployment of resources, are required to ensure that the education in place meets every pupil's needs.
- Plans to implement improvements to reading across the school have been slowed because of the pandemic. While some initial training for staff has taken place, this is not being used consistently in all subjects. In addition, pupils who have fallen behind with reading are not getting the intensive support they need that will help them to read well. Leaders know they need to ensure this provision is provided quickly.
- The governing body shares the headteacher's drive and determination to improve the education of their pupils. There is clear evidence of robust decision-making and actions to strengthen the leadership of the school. Governors are well informed about the school's priorities and ask searching

questions about the education pupils are receiving at the current time. This includes a consideration of the workload and well-being of leaders and staff.

- The school benefits from collaborative work with the headteacher's other school. Teachers value this partnership and its impact in continuing to improve the school's curriculum. The local authority's school improvement partner knows the school well and supports leaders and governors in their ambition for Aldworth as it looks to the future.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, staff, the chair of governors and a representative of the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown. We also spoke to a group of pupils.

We also reviewed the school development plan, curriculum planning, documentation relating to the work of governors and your survey of pupils and parents about remote education. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 95 free-text responses, and 78 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

Aimee Floyd
Her Majesty's Inspector