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Patricia Hammond
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Dear Ms Hammond

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Champion School

Following my remote inspection with Rachel Tordoff, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 25 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 March 2018.

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 that key stage 3 and 4 curriculums are consistently well planned and ambitious in all subjects
- ensure that subject curriculums are planned well to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)
- provide appropriate support for pupils who struggle to read well and build the school's culture of reading.

Context

- Trustees have appointed two deputy headteachers, four subject leaders and a new headteacher since the previous inspection. There has been significant change in the membership of the board of trustees, including a new chair, and new members and trustees.
- The vast majority of pupils were educated at home when schools were only open to some children due to COVID-19 restrictions at the start of the spring term. Almost one third of vulnerable pupils and one third of pupils with an education, health and care plan were educated on site during this time.
- Currently, almost all pupils are attending the school on site.

Main findings

- Leaders are determined to provide pupils with an education underpinned by the school's vision of 'achievement, character, and excellence'. They want all pupils to do well. Leaders have changed the curriculum in Years 7 to 9. The new curriculum gives pupils enough time to build their broad subject knowledge before starting their examination courses in Year 10.
- Leaders have continued to improve the school since the previous inspection, despite the pandemic. In some subjects learning is well planned. Curriculum plans in these subjects are focused on precise subject knowledge that is well sequenced so that pupils can know more and remember more. In the science curriculum for example, knowledge is revisited so that pupils can consolidate and deepen their learning. Not all subjects have well-developed curriculum plans.
- Teachers are currently checking the learning that pupils completed at home during the third national lockdown. When these checks show that pupils have not understood all of the important knowledge, teachers revisit this information. Teachers are returning to the usual subject curriculums. Pupils are learning those aspects that are more suitably learned on site. Leaders make sure that pupils have access to specialist classrooms, while maintaining COVID-19 safety measures.

- Teachers provide remote education to the very small number of pupils who are not attending on site due to COVID-19. This includes the live streaming of school-based lessons. Teachers ensure that these pupils have access to relevant resources to support their learning.
- Teachers are working closely with pupils in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form to prepare these pupils for the next stage of their education, training or employment. Teachers and leaders are reassuring these pupils by focusing on the learning they need for their future.
- Leaders are prioritising reading as an area for improvement. Their plans to develop a whole-school reading programme have been slowed down by the pandemic. They intend to redevelop the library and improve its resources. Younger pupils who are at an early stage of reading have some support, including learning phonics. Older pupils have not had the support they need.
- Leaders identify pupils' needs and access support from external agencies when necessary. Leaders have not thought carefully enough about the information teachers need to plan their curriculums so that pupils with SEND get the support they need to be successful. They do not check that teachers are using the information well to meet these pupils' needs.
- Trustees are ambitious for the school and want every pupil to be successful. They have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. They have taken swift and decisive actions focused on improving the school since the previous inspection. Trustees challenge and support leaders effectively to lead and manage the school and its curriculum well.
- Leaders and teachers have benefited from working with colleagues from other schools. Staff have worked closely with a local teaching school alliance and have attended subject network meetings. The impact of this support is seen in improved leadership capacity and improved curriculum planning in some subjects.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, senior leaders, subject leaders, other school leaders, pupils, and representatives of those responsible for governance to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils in the current circumstances.

We also observed pupils in a reading lesson. We reviewed information about the curriculum. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 92 free-text responses, and 68 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Northamptonshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Chris Davies
Her Majesty's Inspector