

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



21 April 2021

Wendy Fowler
Headteacher
Milton Park Primary School
Eastney Road
Southsea
Portsmouth
PO4 8ET

Dear Mrs Fowler

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Milton Park Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Shazia Akram, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 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 October 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:

- ensure that planning in all subjects is reviewed and adapted, so that pupils are provided with the essential knowledge they need for future learning.

Context

- The school has a resourced provision for up to 16 pupils with speech, language and communication needs.
- Since the last section 5 inspection, staffing has remained stable.
- At the start of the spring term, before the school reopened to all pupils, around three quarters of pupils were educated at home. Over half of pupils with an education, health and care plan and approximately a third of those identified as vulnerable were being educated on site.
- At the time of this inspection, almost all pupils were attending on site.

Main findings

- Leaders have worked tirelessly to make sure that all pupils have continued to receive a broad and engaging education throughout the pandemic. Pupils told us that, while they enjoyed remote learning, they are really happy to be back on site. Parents thoroughly appreciate how hard staff worked to provide them with support and guidance on home education.
- Prior to March 2020, leaders had reviewed the curriculum to ensure that all subjects were well-sequenced and planned. Over the last year, staff have received training to make sure they have the subject knowledge to help pupils learn well. Staff quickly learned to use a variety of digital resources efficiently during lockdown. Pupils continue to benefit from the creative and interesting ways staff have adapted resources and activities.
- Teachers are checking what pupils have learned in all subjects from the spring term. This information is helping teachers understand what previous learning pupils need to revise before they can move on to new ideas. Leaders know that pupils may have missed some essential knowledge during the period when schools were only open to some pupils. Because of this, subject leaders and teachers are currently reviewing curriculum planning and making careful adjustments. Leaders have completed this work effectively for most, but not all, subjects.
- Throughout the pandemic, leaders have continued striving to ensure that all pupils learn to read confidently. Since the last section 5 inspection, leaders have focused diligently on improving the teaching of reading across the school and continue to do so. Phonics teaching continued during lockdown and struggling readers (both at home and at school) were given extra

support. During this period, pupils enjoyed a rich and broad selection of books available from an extensive online library. Pupils continue to benefit from this library.

- Staff have shown commitment and determination to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their families well. Staff continue to use new technologies effectively in order to communicate with families, despite the COVID-19 restrictions. As a result, many interventions and therapies were able to continue throughout lockdowns, and relationships between staff and families have strengthened. Staff have been proactive in ensuring that the most vulnerable pupils receive any additional help needed on their return to school.
- Governors take their responsibilities seriously, providing effective support and challenge to leaders. During the first lockdown, they were quick to master their chosen online platform so that they could continue meeting with school leaders throughout the pandemic. As a result of carefully devised systems, alongside strong communication with leaders, governors have an accurate oversight of what is happening in school.
- Leaders welcome the helpful support and challenge from the local authority and from their school improvement consultant. Leaders implement useful initiatives promptly, and the positive impact of work over the last year is visible in curriculum developments.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other leaders, pupils, staff, 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 heard pupils read and looked at examples of subject leaders' planning. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 33 free-text responses, and 49 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 Portsmouth. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Maxine McDonald-Taylor
Her Majesty's Inspector