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Tracey Wynn
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Dear Mrs Wynn

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Doxey Primary and Nursery School

Following my remote inspection with Wayne Simner, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on Tuesday 16 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 December 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:

- subject leaders check what pupils have learned and remembered in all subjects and ensure that gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills are addressed in future planning.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, two teaching staff have left the school and one new member has joined. There has been a change in the leadership of early years. Additional support staff have been appointed in nursery and to help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Between the start of January and 5 March 2021, approximately one quarter of pupils were educated on site. About nine out of 10 vulnerable pupils and all pupils with education, health and care plans were attending school.
- At the time of this inspection, all pupils were attending on site.
- At the time of this inspection, one staff member was absent from work due to COVID-19.

Main findings

- You have maintained your focus and commitment to providing a well-balanced curriculum for pupils. Staff have embraced new ways of working and utilised technology to deliver the curriculum. Together, you have ensured that pupils working at home or in school have continued to learn the full range of subjects.
- Before the pandemic, you had redesigned your curriculum, but its implementation was at an early stage. The disruption caused by repeated school closures has meant that staff have not been able to deliver the curriculum plan as intended. Nevertheless, you have maintained high expectations and staff have adapted and reordered some content to remain as close to the planned curriculum as possible.
- Since returning to school, staff have checked younger pupils' phonic knowledge. English and mathematics checks are also planned to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. Additional support will be given to pupils who need extra help to catch up. However, subject leaders have yet to determine how they will assess and check how much pupils have learned and remembered in other subjects. Gaps in pupils' learning knowledge may mean that they do not reach the standards expected in subjects such as history.
- Staff in the early years have already detected wider gaps than usual in children's communication and language, social and physical skills. During

lockdown, staff adapted planning in line with the rest of the school. Work was planned in short blocks of time. Staff feel that learning losses reduced as the school's remote education offer improved and became more established. Topics are linked to books. This helps build children's vocabulary and improve their language skills. The early years leader has a clear strategy in place to ensure that children get back on track quickly.

- You continue to prioritise reading and place a sharp focus on learning to read. Teachers taught a new sound each day during the lockdown periods. Pre-recorded videos produced by staff helped parents support their children. Early checks show that younger pupils have regressed less in phonics than anticipated. However, you sense that some older pupils have fallen behind, especially pupils who are disadvantaged. Staff hear these pupils read daily in school to help them regain the skills needed.
- You keep a close eye on the welfare of vulnerable pupils. You ensured that almost all vulnerable pupils attended school during the recent lockdown. Pupils receive one-to-one adult support and work in small groups to boost their confidence and increase the attention they receive. These pupils have flourished due to the strong care and nurture provided.
- You were successful in ensuring that pupils with complex needs continued to attend school. As a result of the focused, bespoke support on site, these pupils have made good gains in their development. For pupils with SEND working at home, staff provided work at the appropriate level and practical resources to support their learning. Staff are currently focusing on pupils' social skills. Staff have yet to assess the impact of school absence on pupils' learning.
- Governors have continued to discuss the school's work remotely. Information provided by school leaders enables them to challenge you about the current provision. For example, governors raised questions about the remote education offer, including the decision not to offer live lessons. You were able to provide a clear rationale for this, which governors accepted. Governors have been kept informed about curriculum development. They have thoughtfully checked on your well-being and that of the staff.
- The local authority commissions school support from an external company. These discussions help you focus on school priorities and evaluate the progress made to date. You also work closely with the local authority to track vulnerable pupils. As a result, you have a good oversight of these pupils. You are working closely with a mathematics hub. This is having a positive impact on staff practice, including in the early years.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, leaders for the curriculum, reading, mathematics, early years and SEND, and a group of pupils. We also held discussions with the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We scrutinised minutes of governing body meetings and a report from the consultant commissioned by the local authority. We also viewed samples of curriculum planning, a review of the schools' remote education offer, an action plan for the use of catch up funding and the school's website. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 57 free-text responses, and 21 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 Staffordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Heather Simpson
Her Majesty's Inspector