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26 April 2021

Jose Hodgkins  
Headteacher  
Upperby Primary School  
Uldale Road  
Carlisle  
CA2 4JT

Dear Mrs Hodgkins

**Additional, remote and on-site monitoring inspection of Upperby Primary School**

Following my inspection with Garry White, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 16 and 17 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 initially carried out remotely but moved to an on-site visit due to significant concerns about safeguarding.

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 February 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.**

**Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should take further action to:

- ensure that the work on curriculum planning resumes so that pupils learn effectively in all subjects.

## **Context**

- Since the previous inspection, two members of the governing body have left, and one new member has been appointed. There is currently one vacancy.
- In the spring term 2021, approximately three quarters of pupils were educated at home. During this time, approximately half of all vulnerable pupils and half of those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) attended school.
- At the time of this inspection, most pupils were attending on site.

## **Main findings**

- You and the teaching staff have ensured that the education of the pupils in your care has continued to be a high priority. You have successfully reintegrated most pupils back into their usual routines upon their most recent return to school. Staff remain in close contact with the small proportion of pupils who continue to be educated remotely. This ensures that these pupils have the resources that they need to access the curriculum. You have well-tested systems in place to deliver the curriculum to any pupils who may need to work remotely in the future.
- Over the last year, you have developed and refined your curriculum offer. For example, teachers adapted the delivery of the curriculum to support pupils who were learning from home. This approach to curriculum planning and delivery has ensured that all pupils have continued to gain new learning, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic. Parents and carers commented that they were very happy with the quality of the remote education offered during the spring term 2021.
- In recent months, you and the staff set about creating new curriculum plans to better meet the needs of all pupils. To develop their expertise, leaders visited similar schools across the north of England. This insight helped subject leaders to develop the English, mathematics and history curriculums. Due to the impact of COVID-19, planned improvements to the whole curriculum faltered. As a result, there is more to do to ensure that subject leaders resume their work to plan all curriculum subjects effectively so that they meet the needs of all pupils.
- At the outset of the pandemic, staff prioritised delivering a curriculum that focused primarily on English and mathematics. During this period, many aspects of modern foreign languages and art were not taught. However, by

the spring term 2021, teachers were back to delivering most curriculum subjects.

- Systems to check what pupils have learned and remembered in the English and mathematics curriculums are well established. Now that all pupils have returned to school, teachers have used these procedures to find out what pupils have retained of their prior learning. The findings from these checks have enabled teachers to begin to amend curriculum plans appropriately so that pupils can make up any lost ground. Subject leaders have identified the curriculum content that was not taught when the school was only open to some children due to COVID-19 restrictions. In some subjects, such as geography, physical education and science, leaders have adapted curriculum plans to prioritise the essential knowledge they want pupils to gain.
- Teachers ensure that reading and phonics are high priorities. Children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 benefit from daily phonics sessions. Staff provide extra support to pupils who fall behind to help them catch up. All pupils have access to reading books and online reading resources, both in school and when learning from home. Staff ensure that reading books are closely matched to the sounds that pupils have learned in class. This helps pupils to read with increased fluency.
- You and the staff continue to support the needs of vulnerable pupils and those with SEND. The pastoral team supports pupils' attendance and well-being. You are developing this work further by strengthening the staff's ability to better understand pupils' mental health needs. The special educational needs coordinator supports pupils well. She helps teachers to break learning down into small steps for pupils with SEND. This allows pupils with SEND to better understand important knowledge.
- Governors have continued to engage in training. This is making them more effective in their roles. They know what the school does well and what still needs to improve. You provide governors with detailed information about the school's work. This means that they are well placed to offer you and other leaders appropriate support and challenge.
- You work in close partnership with the local authority. This support has helped you to develop links with partner schools. It has also aided subject leaders in their work to improve the curriculum.
- You continue to put safeguarding at the forefront of the school's work. This has involved training staff to spot potential safeguarding concerns. Staff are aware of their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. They know how to record and share their concerns. You have taken a range of steps to minimise potential safeguarding risks. Parents are positive in their views about the safeguarding culture of the school.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely but moved to an on-site visit due to concerns about safeguarding. We held remote meetings with you and the deputy headteacher. We spoke with subject leaders and listened to pupils read to a trusted adult. We held telephone conversations with three parents. We met with a representative of the local authority and three members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. These meetings were to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

In addition to this, we made arrangements to check on the school site and review documentation relating to safeguarding. We also held a meeting with the designated safeguarding leader.

We also examined minutes from governing body meetings and examples of the school's curriculum documentation. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 47 free-text responses, and 43 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 Cumbria. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Donald  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**