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Matthew Larminie
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Dear Mr Larminie

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of The Mandeville School

Following my remote inspection with Yasmin Maskatiya, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 4 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.

Following changes to government guidance and the imposition of COVID-19 (coronavirus) lockdown restrictions, 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 January 2018.

Having considered all the evidence and taking into account the impact of COVID-19 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 those pupils who have been less engaged during this period of remote education get the right support quickly to help them catch up
- ensure that the curriculum content is carefully chosen and sequenced in all subjects, so teachers understand how to help pupils build their knowledge over time
- raise the profile of reading across the school, by strategically planning how all pupils will be encouraged to read more and helping those who have fallen behind to catch up.

Context

- There have been significant changes in staffing since the last Section 5 inspection. This includes leadership posts within the school at senior and subject level, including the headteacher.
- There has also been considerable change in the membership of the governing body. This includes the election of a new chair of governors.
- During the autumn term 2020, a large number of pupils needed to access their education remotely for short periods of time because of COVID-19. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 were most affected due to repeated intervals of self-isolation.
- At the time of this inspection, the vast majority of pupils were being educated remotely. Around a tenth of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or who are vulnerable in another way, have been going into school for their learning.

Main findings

- Senior leaders have worked hard to ensure that pupils are receiving an education at this time. This includes lessons delivered through remote education as well as the weekly well-being check-ins between staff and pupils. While not all pupils have engaged as well as hoped during this period, leaders are determined that support will be provided to help everyone catch up. This determination exists despite the challenges of COVID-19 and the disruption of substantial changes over the past year.
- Leaders have rightly prioritised the much needed improvements to the school's curriculum. Curriculum planning is at different stages of development with some subjects, such as English and science, being slightly further ahead. Subject leaders understand the importance of building pupils' knowledge in a carefully, sequenced way and this is becoming evident in emerging subject

planning. Leaders are including any missed learning into the planned lessons for the summer term.

- The vast majority of pupils have been learning at home since the start of January. Staff were trained in the use of digital technology. Leaders made sure that the majority of pupils had access to the necessary equipment when working from home. The small number of pupils who have attended school on site have benefited from additional support from staff. This includes help with their online lessons as well as additional support from the learning support assistants. Physical education sessions have been built into the timetable to give pupils the opportunity for regular exercise.
- Pupils with SEND are receiving appropriate guidance that helps them with their learning. Additional adult support for individuals and small groups during 'live' lessons has helped pupils with SEND and their teachers. Learning support assistants have made additional contact with pupils and their families to quickly solve any concerns. Many pupils with SEND have been working through printed packs of work that have been adapted to meet their needs. Teachers now know how important it is to check this work as soon as it is returned to school so pupils are provided with advice about how they can improve.
- Leaders have only just begun to consider plans to raise the profile of reading across the school. There has been some specific support for pupils who find reading difficult but much of this has been paused during this period of remote education. School leaders agreed with inspectors that promoting reading and improving literacy are an urgent priority.
- Most pupils in the sixth form have engaged well with remote education this term. Many of the Year 13 students have completed their applications for the next stage of their learning. However, staff are aware of the students who need much greater assistance to identify their next steps. Pupils in Year 11 are receiving suitable careers guidance to support their decisions about their post-16 education. Virtual sessions about sixth form courses have been delivered, with individual face to face interviews planned for all pupils when they return to school.
- Despite the many recent changes to their membership, the governing body work well to monitor and evaluate the strategic improvements leaders are making to the school. Governors have supported leaders when considering the remote education offer for all pupils.
- Over the past year, the school has benefited from help from a number of different local schools. The national lockdown has not disrupted this work and staff really value this support. These partnerships are helping leaders make improvements to the curriculum and to the management of pupils' behaviour. The executive headteacher and school improvement advisor know the school

well and are supporting senior leaders and governors in their drive and ambition for improvement. This has been beneficial during the pandemic and as the school 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 considered a number of documents provided by the school, including safeguarding information and minutes of governing body meetings. We also looked at examples of planning in different subjects. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 45 free-text responses, and 82 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 Buckinghamshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Aimee Floyd
Her Majesty's Inspector