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Helen Heap
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Dear Mrs Heap

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Rounds Green Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Rob Hackfath, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 18 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 was judged as requiring improvement at its previous section 5 inspection. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in April 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 the 'recovery curriculum' focuses sufficiently on the school's key priorities for mathematics
- ensure that the school's assessment arrangements check what pupils have learned and remembered in the work covered during and before the most recent lockdown
- put plans in place for how the small number of pupils still working remotely will be best supported to access the full curriculum when they return to school.

Context

- The post of acting headteacher has been made permanent since the last inspection. The chair and vice-chair of the governing body were both appointed in December 2019.
- Over four fifths of pupils were educated at home when the school was closed to most pupils at the start of the spring term. About half of vulnerable pupils and a small proportion of pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan were attending on site at the start of the spring term.
- The overall level of pupil attendance is currently 95.5%.
- At the time of this inspection, a small percentage of staff were absent due to COVID-19. Leaders were able to manage this through the increased capacity of staff provided by the governing body.

Main findings

- Leaders had a clear rationale for adapting their curriculum during lockdown. They have planned carefully a 'recovery curriculum' focused on pupils' well-being. It emphasises art and music, which were less prominent features of the curriculum during the remote education provision.
- Leaders have ordered curriculum content effectively by setting key priorities for each subject to be achieved by the end of next term. They have identified gaps in pupils' learning that need to be taught first. Plans are less clear about how teachers will check what pupils have remembered and know from the work set during remote learning. Leaders have not considered how gaps in learning will be addressed for those pupils still at home.
- Subject leaders have devised well-developed curriculum plans since the last inspection. These identify the core knowledge and skills pupils require, and the key terms and subject-specific vocabulary needed to make progress. Subject leaders have revised their plans appropriately for pupils working

remotely. For example, practical science activities have been re-sequenced because of pupils' limited access to equipment.

- The school has a strong focus on reading, which is enshrined in its phonics programme. Leaders have developed a range of creative and engaging approaches to establish the culture of a love of reading. Since the full reopening of school, leaders have checked pupils' reading to ensure that books are well-matched to the letters and sounds pupils know. This has also helped leaders shape future plans by identifying missing key vocabulary and concepts.
- The curriculum plan for mathematics ensures that pupils in different year groups can all work on the same topic, at the same time, and at an appropriate depth. It also allows for revisiting themes over time to ensure pupils progress. The current 'recovery curriculum', however, does not focus sufficiently on the school's priority areas in mathematics.
- Leaders have set out clearly on the school's website their expectations for remote learning. Plans remain in place for the small number of pupils who are still self-isolating at home. The English, mathematics, geography and history content is broadly the same as that taught in school. There is a wide range of activities linked to the wider curriculum, including physical exercise. However, there is little coverage of religious education, art, design and technology, and music, which the 'recovery curriculum' is seeking to address.
- During the most recent national lockdown, pupils with an EHC plan who were learning remotely received a comprehensive and bespoke package of support. Staff visited homes regularly to provide the equipment needed for activities. Teachers adapted remote work appropriately to take account of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and for those who speak English as an additional language. Curriculum adaptations are still in place for those still receiving education remotely.
- Staff had frequent contact with vulnerable pupils who were not in school during the third national lockdown through telephone calls and home visits, as well as links with external services. Now that most pupils are back on site, leaders have provided effective additional support, including for those with SEND, targeted at specific year groups. There is also well-planned provision for those at the earliest stages of learning English as an additional language.
- The governing body has been strengthened to ensure that it has more educational expertise than before. Governors have met leaders regularly throughout the pandemic. Consequently, they are well informed about the school's curriculum, remotely and on site. They scrutinise curriculum decisions and challenge leaders appropriately. Safeguarding and leaders' workload remain high priorities. Governors have taken important strategic decisions to

relieve the pressure on senior leaders and enhance the work of middle leaders.

- Leaders have benefited from the support and challenge of the local authority's school improvement adviser over their response to the pandemic and provision for remote learning. This has led to identified areas to focus on and gaps in curriculum provision to prioritise.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders. We met three members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair. We also met with a school improvement adviser from the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown. We also met with a group of six pupils and heard four pupils read.

We looked at samples of remote lesson activities and pupils' work, with a specific focus on early reading, mathematics and the wider curriculum, including science, history, geography and physical education. We took account of 28 responses to Ofsted's Parent View, 26 parents' free-text comments and 46 responses to the staff questionnaire.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims
Her Majesty's Inspector