

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



23 April 2021

Daniel Simm
Headteacher
Devonshire Primary Academy
Devonshire Road
Blackpool
Lancashire
FY3 8AF

Dear Mr Simm

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Devonshire Primary Academy

Following my remote inspection with Jackie Stillings, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 2 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 three successive judgements of requires improvement. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in January 2020.

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 all curriculum plans provide precise information about the knowledge that pupils need to develop at each stage of their learning.

Context

- Since the previous inspection a new assistant headteacher has been appointed. There is also a new chair of governors.
- Across autumn term 2020, approximately one third of pupils had to be educated at home for a short period of time.
- At the time of this inspection around one third of pupils were being educated on site. This included approximately four fifths of the school's most vulnerable pupils. All of the pupils with education, health and care plans were attending on site.

Main findings

- You have worked successfully with the leadership team to ensure that pupils are able to continue their learning during these challenging times. You have adapted the existing curriculum to meet current challenges. Those pupils working at home study a curriculum that closely matches the one being provided for pupils who are in school.
- At the start of the pandemic you were in the process of making changes to the school's curriculum. You had introduced new approaches to the teaching of mathematics and English. You had also modified your history and geography curriculums. Plans for these subjects provide clear guidance to teachers about the knowledge that pupils need to acquire and the order in which it will be taught. However, the school's plans for other subjects do not have the same clarity and precision.
- Learning continues as usual for vulnerable pupils and the children of key workers who are attending school. Staff have provided many vulnerable pupils with additional support, particularly in reading and mathematics. This is helping them to keep up with their learning. Staff are in regular contact with the parents and carers of pupils who are working at home. They keep a close eye on how well pupils are progressing with their learning. Leaders have offered places in school to vulnerable pupils who are not engaging well enough in remote education. This has led to an increase in the numbers of vulnerable pupils attending school.
- You have provided all pupils with the resources that they need to learn at home. This includes books and art materials. You have worked with governors and parents to ensure that all pupils have the electronic devices that they need to access online learning when working at home. You have also ensured

that staff have the knowledge and expertise to teach pupils remotely. This means that pupils are able to keep up with their friends who are working in school.

- There are high levels of engagement in learning, regardless of how pupils are accessing their education. Staff make regular checks on the progress that pupils are making in their learning, both at school and at home. They provide helpful feedback to pupils on the work that they complete. This helps to ensure that all pupils continue to benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum.
- You have prioritised the teaching of reading across the school. Teachers have adapted the reading curriculum so that pupils learn the same content at home as those who are working in school. For example, teachers use videos to help younger pupils to learn and practise phonics. Older pupils have access to online reading activities. This is helping to ensure that pupils continue to develop their reading skills, along with their love of reading.
- Staff are providing effective support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The leader for SEND works with teachers to help them adapt their plans to ensure that these pupils receive an education that is matched to their needs. Leaders have continued to work with a wide range of external agencies to provide support for these pupils and their families.
- Governors are fully aware of the challenges facing the school. Governors hold you and other leaders to account for the quality of education that is being provided for pupils. They play an active role in school life. They have regular discussions with leaders to assure themselves that everything possible is being done to support pupils and their families during the current challenging circumstances.
- The trust has supported senior leaders in developing the curriculum and the school's remote education offer. The trust has also helped to strengthen the skills of subject leaders through regular training and support.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, trustees and governors to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown. We also met with the trust's chief executive officer.

We met with pupils to discuss their learning and to hear them read. We examined curriculum plans, looked at samples of pupils' work and viewed examples of remote learning. We considered the 10 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including seven free-text responses. We also reviewed the 51 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Sea View multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Blackpool. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Paul Tomkow
Her Majesty's Inspector