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Dear Mrs Cartlidge

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Adelaide Heath Academy

Following my remote inspection with Ian Hardman, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 19 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 special measures.

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 to require special measures at its previous section 5 inspection. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in March 2018.

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:

- develop the reading curriculum, including the approach to delivering phonics in key stages 3 and 4, so that pupils read with accuracy and fluency.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, the age range of pupils attending the school has been extended. The school now caters for pupils aged 8 to 16. Previously, it catered for pupils aged 11 to 16. All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan for social, emotional and mental health needs.
- One governor has left the strategic improvement board since the last inspection.
- Approximately over two thirds of pupils were educated at home in the spring term 2021 before the school reopened to all pupils.
- At the time of this inspection, approximately three quarters of pupils were attending school on site. Pupils in the Year 9 'bubble' were working from home following a confirmed case of COVID-19. There was a very small proportion of pupils who were not attending because they are reluctant to return to school.

Main findings

- Trustees and governors have overseen the development of a stable staff team at Adelaide Heath. Staff have established positive relationships with pupils. This has underpinned an improvement in pupils' attendance and behaviour. You have worked effectively with other leaders to ensure that all pupils continued to receive an education when they were working remotely. Your actions have ensured that pupils are settling back into routines now that most have returned to school.
- Prior to the pandemic, the curriculums for most subjects were already established. Some were still in development, for example history and geography in key stages 3 and 4. Your plans to improve the curriculum for these subjects have been delayed due to the pandemic. That said, you have clear plans in place to get back on track with this aspect of the school's work.
- Subject leaders successfully adapted the curriculum so that pupils were able to continue with their studies, whether they were learning at school or at home. For example, the science curriculum was reorganised so that pupils could complete practical work when all pupils returned to school. Subject leaders have thought carefully about the learning that pupils have missed or forgotten during the spring term. They have amended the curriculum plans further to help pupils recap on previous learning or to cover lost ground.

- In Year 11, essential learning has been prioritised to ensure that pupils remain on track to achieve the qualifications that they need to go on to further education, employment or training. This includes those pupils who access some of their learning at a local college. Pupils who are studying vocational pathways attend additional sessions so that they are better equipped to meet the course requirements.
- The whole-school reading curriculum lacks sufficient detail. It does not provide staff with enough guidance to help them support pupils to become successful readers. The phonics curriculum is well established in key stage 2. However, the development of this curriculum to support pupils at the early stages of reading in key stages 3 and 4 has been delayed due to the pandemic.
- You have been successful in overcoming the impact of the pandemic on pupils' work placements. Weekly virtual sessions, with a visiting expert, mean that pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 have continued to gain experience of the world of work. These pupils are well informed about their career choices. The pupils that we spoke to talked confidently about their future goals.
- Teachers continue to deliver remote education for those pupils who are required to self-isolate or have found it difficult to return to school. You are quick to contact parents and carers to offer additional support when you spot that pupils are not engaging with remote learning.
- Pupils' personal development is of the utmost importance to you, staff, governors and trustees. There is a range of therapies and activities in place that support pupils' social, emotional and mental health and well-being. Pupils and parents explained how these activities help pupils to manage their anxieties so that they are ready to learn. Staff pay due attention to the targets in pupils' EHC plans so that they can plan appropriate learning activities.
- Trustees and governors hold you and other leaders to account for the effectiveness of the curriculum. They are active partners in the school's improvement journey. They have ensured that appropriate arrangements for pupils' learning have been put in place during the current circumstances.
- The trust has provided valuable support; for example, it has played an instrumental role in developing the effectiveness of subject leadership. Support from the trust has also enabled leaders to implement and improve the curriculum in most subjects.

Evidence

We conducted this inspection remotely. We spoke to you, the chief executive officer (CEO) of the Adelaide Trust, other senior leaders, pupils, subject leaders, representatives of the local authority as well as trustees and representatives from

the strategic improvement board to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also looked at schemes of work in a number of subjects and scrutinised examples of pupils' work. We looked at 13 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including eight free-text responses. We spoke to three parents by telephone. We considered the responses to 15 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the CEO of the Adelaide Academy Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cheshire East. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Steve Bentham
Her Majesty's Inspector