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Vincent Murray
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Dear Mr Murray

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of The Grange School

Following my remote inspection with Shazia Akram, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 30 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 for 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 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 (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:

- embed the newly introduced approaches to teaching reading, so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) improve their fluency, comprehension and confidence in reading.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, a new deputy headteacher and one new assistant headteacher have been appointed. A new chair of governors and seven other governors have also joined.
- During the spring term, approximately nine out of ten pupils were educated at home before the school reopened to all pupils. One third of vulnerable pupils and a similar proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans were educated on site during this period.
- At the time of this inspection, approximately nine out of ten pupils were attending on site. A small proportion of pupils were being educated remotely.

Main findings

- Leaders and governors are taking decisive action to improve the school and ensure that all pupils continue their learning, despite the pandemic. Staff prepared well for the move to remote education in the most recent national lockdown in January 2021. After reflecting on the provision of education during the first national lockdown, leaders improved staff training in the use of technology. Teachers provide an increasingly effective curriculum for pupils who are taught at home and at school in the current circumstances.
- In some subjects, subject leaders have reorganised the order in which topics are taught, so that some knowledge can be taught face to face. For example, leaders decided to teach elements of the mathematics and science curriculums later in the year because teachers want to teach certain elements to pupils in person.
- Leaders recognise that pupils have gaps in their knowledge because of the partial closure of schools over the past year. Consequently, teachers have assessed where pupils are in their learning and have adapted their teaching so that knowledge gaps are filled. Pupils in Year 11 appreciate the feedback that they receive from teachers and find the support from pastoral leaders helpful.
- You have identified that pupils in Years 7 to 9 have had less access to practical equipment this year because of the school's COVID-19 arrangements. For example, pupils in Year 8 have not been able to use science laboratories for science experiments. You are planning to make sure

that pupils get opportunities to use a wider range of resources later in the school year.

- In Year 13, students are being taught certain topics for longer than usual and in more depth. This is helping them to fully understand and remember complex concepts and knowledge that they studied when the school was partially closed. Students in Year 13 receive well-planned careers advice which ensures that they are increasingly well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- You and your staff have worked effectively to make sure that, following the reopening of the school to all pupils, the small number of pupils who are working at home continue their learning in all subjects. Teachers and support staff carefully monitor how well pupils are learning, so that they can adapt teaching effectively and provide pupils with the right help.
- Teachers provide pupils with a range of well-selected books to read. Pupils find daily reading sessions helpful in encouraging them to enjoy reading. However, leaders have identified that some pupils with SEND do not read as well as others when they are working at home. Leaders need to continue to embed the new approach to improving pupils' reading and make sure that all pupils learn to read quickly and confidently.
- In other respects, pupils with SEND receive a range of additional help. Staff 'mentors' help pupils to meet the ambitious individual targets that pupils are set. Furthermore, leaders have maintained specialist support for pupils throughout the pandemic, for example from speech and language therapists.
- Governors have held leaders to account well in the current circumstances. Governors check what senior leaders tell them by speaking to subject leaders, visiting lessons and reviewing the school's online resources. Subject leaders also present their departments' progress to governors and are then questioned on the information they have provided. Governors are well informed about leaders' actions in different subjects and what impact they are having.
- The local authority provides leaders with sensible advice on how to strengthen assessments and ensure that the school's self-evaluation is accurate. As part of a local authority initiative, leaders have shared the school's approach to remote education with other schools in the area.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, three subject leaders, two governors (including the chair of governors), a representative from the local authority, several members of staff and two groups of

pupils to discuss leaders' actions to provide education for all pupils during a national lockdown.

We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 119 free-text responses and 89 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

Harry Ingham
Her Majesty's Inspector