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Wendy Mitcheson
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Mitcheson

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Broadwood Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Marcus Newby, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 25 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 has received two successive judgements of requires improvement. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in March 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:

- refine existing curriculum plans so that they are detailed and coherent across all subjects and so that they support subject leaders to monitor teachers' implementation of the curriculum effectively
- develop assessment systems in subjects other than English and mathematics so that teachers know if pupils are ready to move on to more complex subject content.

Context

- There have been several changes to staffing since the previous inspection. The headteacher and four temporary teachers have left the school. The current headteacher joined in April 2019. One parent governor has resigned.
- Two thirds of pupils were educated at home when the school was closed to most pupils at the start of the spring term. Just over two thirds of the pupils that leaders classed as vulnerable were educated on site. Two thirds of pupils with education, health and care plans were also attending on site.
- At the time of this inspection, almost all pupils were attending on site. A very small number of pupils were self-isolating and were continuing their education remotely.

Main findings

- Leaders and those responsible for governance say that they want the very best for the pupils in their school. Before the pandemic, you had begun to make changes to the school's curriculum. You told us that you carefully selected the areas to prioritise, such as reading and the development of the curriculum in a range of subjects. You have continued to work on these developments throughout the period of restrictions.
- Senior leaders and teachers have worked together to develop a project-based curriculum model. Current plans set out the key knowledge to be taught in each subject. However, in some subjects, the order in which this is to be taught is not logical. You explained that staff received initial training to support these new developments; they had the opportunity to practise new approaches prior to March 2020. This has supported teachers to deliver sequences of lessons throughout the period of partial closure.
- The curriculum leader is currently working alongside staff to ensure a consistent approach to the delivery of the project-based curriculum. Teachers have examined curriculum plans to identify subject content that was missed during the period of restrictions. They aim to ensure that this content is included in future lessons. You recognise that there is still work to do in order to improve assessment in the wider curriculum.

- Leaders have made it a priority to improve the curriculum for reading. Curriculum plans for reading are clearly sequenced and identify what pupils should learn and when. All staff have received training to improve the teaching of reading. As a result, the teaching of reading is now consistent in all year groups. Phonics is taught daily, including for those pupils who do not have secure phonic knowledge. You have bought suitable reading material to ensure that books are well matched to the sounds pupils know.
- You explained that teachers have checked to see if any pupils have gaps in their reading knowledge on their return to school. Teachers are spending time methodically revisiting content to make sure that pupils are ready to move on in their learning.
- You trained staff and pupils in the use of devices and software to support remote learning. You have ensured that those pupils who need technology to help them learn at home have the resources they need. You have clear expectations for those learning from home. This includes twice daily check-ins with teachers. Your plan is to continue with this system of remote learning for pupils who need to learn from home.
- You told us that you place high priority on checking pupils' well-being. This includes the most vulnerable pupils. During the period of partial closure, you invited all vulnerable pupils into school to access learning. Where pupils are learning from home, regular check-ins are made to offer support and guidance with learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including those in the enhanced resource provision, continue to receive an education matched to their individual needs. Staff have received training to provide a bespoke curriculum for pupils with SEND. You told us that you continue to engage with external agencies, such as speech and language therapists, to offer support to pupils and their families.
- Governors know the school well and, as a result, are able to challenge leaders about the school's journey of improvement. Governors visit the school frequently to speak with leaders and staff to understand the impact of actions that are being taken to improve the quality of education. They acknowledge that the development of the curriculum is an area for the school to continue to improve.
- The local authority and school improvement partner have provided support for the headteacher to plan for required improvements. Strong links are maintained with the 'English Hub' and 'the Great North Mathematics Hub'. This support is having a direct impact on these subjects in the school.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, representatives of those responsible for governance, a representative of the local authority and the school's improvement partner to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also heard pupils read. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including eight free-text responses, and 17 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 Newcastle upon Tyne. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Gill Wild
Her Majesty's Inspector