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Hannah Connor-James  
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Cambridgeshire  
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Dear Mrs Connor-James

**Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Cromwell Academy**

Following my remote inspection with Tessa Holledge, 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 has received two successive judgements of requires improvement. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in September 2019.

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 subject leaders continue to have the training they need to support teachers to deliver each curriculum subject to a high standard.

## **Context**

- Since the previous inspection, staffing has remained stable. One governor has left the governing body and a community governor has been appointed in their place. The multi-academy trust is seeking to appoint another governor to the governing body.
- Just over half of pupils were educated at home in the spring term before the school fully re-opened to all pupils. Two thirds of vulnerable pupils were educated on site during the national lockdown. All pupils with an education health and care plan (EHC plan) were also educated on site during this time.
- At the time of the inspection no pupils were being educated at home.

## **Main findings**

- Leaders launched a revised curriculum at the start of this academic year. An external advisor led training for subject leaders. However, this work was delayed by the most recent national lockdown. Leaders recognise that this training will have to be resumed to fully support teachers in effectively putting the revised curriculum into place for all subjects.
- Leaders prioritised making sure that pupils had access to their learning, whether they were in school or learning at home. Earlier in the school year, leaders checked whether pupils had the technology they needed to learn from home. Where this wasn't the case, leaders provided pupils with the electronic devices pupils needed. In January, when the most recent national lockdown started, pupils' learning was swiftly moved online so pupils could access their learning remotely.
- Throughout the pandemic, leaders have minimised any disruption to pupils' learning. Teachers have adjusted planning according to pupils' needs at home and in school. Teachers have provided resources the pupils need to complete their lessons at home. Whenever possible, leaders have ensured that teachers have delivered the usual curriculum to pupils, both when pupils were learning at home and at school. Currently, there are no pupils learning from home. If this changes, teachers will resume their teaching remotely.
- Leaders have made sure that reading has remained a priority. For younger pupils, phonics lessons continued during the spring term, whether they were learning in school or at home. When pupils needed it, teachers made sure that additional support was provided to help pupils develop their reading strategies. Older pupils have benefitted from accessing books in school and

online that are carefully matched to their reading ability. This is helping pupils develop and extend their reading skills.

- Leaders have made sure that teachers continue to check how well pupils have been learning in their lessons. The information from these checks has helped teachers plan a specialist curriculum for the pupils' return to school. This has ensured that pupils have had the support they need to access the full range of subjects in the school's curriculum prior to the Easter break.
- For the summer term, leaders plan to continue to adjust the curriculum. The checks teachers have carried out have informed teachers which knowledge pupils may have missed or have forgotten. Teachers are planning support across the summer term to help pupils bridge these gaps and catch up on what they need to, mainly in their reading, writing and mathematics learning.
- Leaders have made sure vulnerable pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have been supported well during the current circumstances. For pupils learning at home, one-to-one support and small breakout groups have been available online. This smaller group support has ensured that pupils with SEND have not fallen far behind where they would normally be at this time of year.
- Governors check how well leaders and staff are supporting pupils. Governors receive training from the local authority. They also received useful advice from the multi-academy trust. Governors are well informed and know what is happening at the school. They challenge and support leaders appropriately.
- The trust has provided valuable support. Specialists have been appointed to develop leaders' plans for the curriculum. The trust has also checked procedures at school, to keep the pupils safe in the current circumstances. Leaders feel supported by the trust's constructive advice.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, the multi-academy trust chief executive officer, pupils, staff, representatives of those responsible for governance, and an external advisor to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also heard pupils read, looked at governors' minutes and a parent survey. We looked at 38 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 22 free-text responses, and 27 staff questionnaires.

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

Yours sincerely

Fyfe Johnston  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**