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27 April 2021

Sam Smith
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Dear Mr Smith

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Hawkesley Church Primary Academy

Following my remote inspection with Heather Phillips, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on Tuesday 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 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 three successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspection. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in November 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 ensure that:

- all subjects have a strong, well-sequenced curriculum in place by further developing subject leaders' expertise.

Context

- Leaders have restructured the senior leadership team since the previous inspection. The deputy headteacher has left the school and two assistant headteacher posts have been created. Two newly qualified teachers have joined the school. One governor has left and three new governors have joined the local academy board.
- Almost half of pupils were educated at home in the spring term before the school re-opened to all pupils. Approximately two thirds of vulnerable pupils and those pupils with an education, health and care plan were educated on site during that time.
- Almost all pupils were being educated in school at the time of this inspection. Some pupils were receiving tuition from staff who were shielding and are, therefore, working from home. A very small number of pupils continue to be educated remotely.

Main findings

- You have strengthened the leadership capacity in the school and stabilised staffing since the previous inspection. This has allowed you to collectively re-design and develop a more ambitious curriculum. With your leadership team, you have established a strong curriculum to help pupils achieve well and succeed in life. Pupils in all year groups learn about a famous person who has overcome adversity. This helps inspire and motivate pupils to work hard.
- Some areas of the curriculum lacked structure and depth before the pandemic. Now, clear plans set out what knowledge and skills you want pupils to learn and remember in different subjects in all year groups. Plans are well sequenced and teachers ensure that pupils learn things in the right order. However, this is stronger in some subjects, such as science and music, than others. You are working hard to ensure that pupils deepen their skills and knowledge in all subjects.
- You maintained your focus on high-quality education during the periods of full and partial school closure. Pupils continued to study all subjects. However, adaptations and adjustments were made to keep pupils on track with their learning and prevent wide gaps in their understanding.
- Assessment is used purposefully and expectations are high. You expect all pupils to attain core knowledge and skills in different topics before moving on

to new learning. Staff regularly check pupils' understanding of current work, together with their recall of previous work. This helps pupils retain information over time and staff to fill any gaps in pupils' learning.

- A very small number of pupils continued to be educated remotely due to individual circumstances at the time of the inspection. Some pupils were also accessing online tuition due to staff shielding. You are able to implement this seamlessly, to respond to individual needs or bubble closures at any time as systems for remote learning are now well established.
- Leaders have thought carefully about reading progression from early years to Year 6. The school's systematic approach to teaching phonics and daily reading routines help pupils make progress. Pupils who struggle with reading are heard reading in school every day and receive support from well-trained staff. Books are matched to pupils' different levels of ability and interests. Good use is made of all available spaces around school to create a literacy-rich environment. Daily story time and access to new and exciting books adds to pupils' enjoyment of reading. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes to reading. Those spoken to said they are reading more than they used to.
- You ensure that the most vulnerable pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities attend school. This means that they benefit from the additional help provided in school by well-trained staff. Pupils continued to receive external specialist support when needed, either in school or remotely throughout the partial closure. You provided extra time for pupils who returned to school in March to help settle them in and reduce their anxiety.
- The local academy board are knowledgeable and well informed. This enables them to ask the right questions. They understand how the curriculum has been developed and where strengths and weaknesses lie. They work closely with school leaders and the trust to ensure that the right things are prioritised. Governors provide strong pastoral support to staff as well as challenging decisions made.
- The trust has been proactive in strengthening governance and school leadership. As a result, the school is moving forwards at pace. The chief executive officer and school improvement adviser for the trust hold school leaders fully to account. They evaluate impact reports submitted by subject leaders and closely monitor actions taken. Input from subject specialists within the trust has served to improve curriculum leadership. However, the trust acknowledges that further work is needed to ensure that all subjects and leadership are equally strong.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior and curriculum leaders, the chief executive officer and school improvement officer for the trust, key stage 2 pupils, and the chair and four governors from the local academy board to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We looked at information on the school's website and curriculum plans. We also scrutinised minutes of the local academy board meetings and a recent report from the trust. We considered responses to our online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including 32 free-text responses, and 23 staff questionnaires.

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 Birmingham Diocesan multi-academy trust, the director of education for the diocese of Birmingham, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Birmingham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Heather Simpson
Her Majesty's Inspector