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Ryan Laker
Head of School
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Dear Mr Laker

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Oakwood Primary Academy

Following my remote inspection with Clive Close, 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 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 2020.

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 the curriculum, in subjects other than English and mathematics, is planned and sequenced so that pupils' knowledge and skills are carefully developed over time, building on what has been taught before
- improve all aspects of communication with parents and carers in order to build parental confidence in the school, including increasing parents' awareness of what leaders and staff are doing to improve the quality of education that pupils receive.

Context

- Aurora Academies Trust established an interim executive board in September 2020, after the school was judged to require special measures in March 2020. A new head of school joined after the March inspection and was appointed on a permanent basis from September 2020. An executive headteacher from within the trust is currently supporting the school. A new inclusion leader was appointed in January 2021.
- Approximately four fifths of pupils were educated at home when the school was closed to most pupils at the start of spring term. Around two thirds of all vulnerable pupils and one third of all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) attended on site during this period.
- At the time of this inspection, no year-group 'bubbles' were self-isolating and learning remotely.

Main findings

- In the most recent lockdown, leaders prioritised the development of their remote learning offer to ensure that all pupils continued to receive an education. Staff maintained regular contact with pupils and families and supported pupils to engage with their learning remotely.
- The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's survey were appreciative of the support they received from leaders and staff throughout the pandemic. However, some told us that they needed better communication about what leaders and staff are doing to improve the school for their children.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have fully reviewed the school's curriculum for reading, writing and mathematics. They have ensured that staff have received the training that they need to help pupils learn and remember more in these subjects. All staff are trained to deliver the school's chosen phonics programme.
- In the most recent lockdown, staff adapted the curriculum for English and mathematics to prioritise those aspects of learning most suited to being

completed remotely. In mathematics, calculation was prioritised and in phonics, pupils were supported to learn and practise their 'speed sounds'. When schools fully reopened on 8 March, staff prioritised areas of the curriculum that had not been taught during lockdown.

- During the recent lockdown, some pupils who were learning from home did not have access to the reading books that they needed. This was particularly the case for vulnerable pupils. Leaders acknowledge that these pupils did not make as much progress as they might. Staff are now ensuring that vulnerable pupils get the right support to become fluent readers.
- The school's curriculum in subjects other than English and mathematics is under development. Leaders need to ensure that all subjects are planned and taught in a carefully ordered way to build pupils' knowledge over time. Leaders aim to continue to provide teachers with high-quality curriculum training in the summer term. This will help staff to develop the expert knowledge they need in the subjects they teach.
- Leaders intend to continue to use online resources to deliver the curriculum remotely to pupils who are not in school. Teachers currently support individual pupils this way. Staff also provide paper-based resources if needed.
- Since taking up her role, the inclusion leader has worked with great commitment to improve the support that pupils with SEND receive. Staff are now receiving additional training to better meet the needs of all pupils. Leaders recognise that partnerships with parents of pupils with SEND should be further developed. This will enable parents to understand how their children are being supported and how well they are progressing in school.
- Members of the interim executive board ensure that leaders are providing pupils with an effective education in current circumstances. They have a thorough understanding of the progress secured since the last inspection. Board members recognise the strengths of the school but know more needs to be done. They are determined that the pace of improvement accelerates in coming months.
- Support from the multi-academy trust has increased leadership capacity. This has enabled school leaders to remain focused on improving the school, including strengthening the remote learning offer in the most recent lockdown.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you and your leaders, the multi-academy trust executive headteacher and chief executive officer, pupils, staff and the chair of the interim executive board to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also reviewed minutes from the interim executive board, curriculum documents, school development plans, the records of continuous professional development for staff and listened to pupils read. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 27 free-text responses, and 31 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the interim executive board and the chief executive officer of the Aurora Academy Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for East Sussex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Alice Roberts
Her Majesty's Inspector