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Tracy Foy
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Dear Mrs Foy

Additional, monitoring inspection of West Craven High School

Following my inspection with Alyson Middlemass, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 16 and 17 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.

Following changes to government guidance and the imposition of COVID-19 (coronavirus) lockdown restrictions, most of Ofsted's monitoring inspections are being carried out remotely. This inspection, however, took place on site due to the serious concerns raised in the previous inspection about safeguarding.

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 November 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.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and those responsible for governance should take further action to:

- ensure that there is training in place so that teachers can identify those pupils who have fallen behind in reading and help them to catch up quickly
- strengthen the curriculum development so that all subject leaders can identify the precise knowledge that pupils need to know and remember.

Context

- Since the last inspection, the local governing committee has been dissolved, and an interim executive board (IEB) was created. Sixteen members of staff have left the school. Governors have appointed 12 new members of staff.
- Leaders have made several key appointments. These include: two deputy headteachers; a leader of computing and business; and a director of mathematics. Governors have appointed directors of English and science from within the multi-academy trust.
- Some staff have been promoted internally, including leaders of history and geography.
- Approximately nine tenths of pupils were educated at home when the school was closed to most pupils at the start of the spring term. Over one half of the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and one third of the pupils who are vulnerable, attended on site during this time.
- At the time of this inspection, all pupils were attending on site.

Main findings

- Since joining the school, you have wasted no time in strengthening the leadership of safeguarding. Your safeguarding leaders provide staff with frequent safeguarding updates and training. These briefings have increased staff's understanding of the risks that pupils may face. Additionally, you have streamlined the ways in which staff report safeguarding concerns. As a result, all staff are clear about who to report concerns to and when. The pupils that we spoke with said that they feel safe in school. Pupils said that they are confident to talk to any member of staff should any concerns arise. Consequently, there is a strong culture of safeguarding right across the school.
- Following your appointment, you carried out a full curriculum review. You implemented considerable structural changes to how the curriculum was taught. For example, you broadened the curriculum by increasing the range of subjects taught at key stage 3. Previously, in some subjects pupils were taught by more than one teacher. You have successfully reduced this practice to provide pupils with greater consistency in learning. You have made these

changes with a sense of urgency. Pupils are benefiting from these changes whether they are learning at home or in school.

- Despite the onset of the pandemic, you and other leaders continued with your plans to develop the curriculum. You strengthened the leadership of some curriculum subjects. You invested in training to ensure that subject leaders have a clearer understanding of how to plan an ambitious curriculum, including for remote education. To varying degrees, subject leaders have begun to consider the order in which curriculum content should be delivered. This is so that pupils build more subject knowledge over time. However, subject leaders are only in the early stages of defining the core knowledge that pupils need to know and remember.
- During the recent period of partial school closures, teachers at West Craven High School ensured that they monitored closely what pupils were learning. This was whether pupils were in school or learning from home. Since pupils have returned, teachers are using everyday assessments to check that their understanding of what pupils know and remember is correct. Subject leaders are gathering this information from teachers so that they can adapt their curriculum plans. This is so that pupils can catch up with any missed or forgotten learning.
- You and other leaders are acutely aware of the importance of ensuring that pupils in Year 11 are fully prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training. Subject leaders have carefully considered the knowledge that these pupils require to progress to post-16 courses. They are ensuring that they teach this core knowledge. In addition, leaders have made time at the end of each day to help Year 11 pupils catch up on any lost learning.
- Leaders have clear systems in place to identify pupils in the early stages of learning to read. Specialist teachers and teaching assistants provide these pupils with the necessary support to develop their phonic knowledge. This support, which continued during the partial school closure, is helping these pupils to learn to read. That said, leaders are aware that a wider group of pupils have fallen further behind with their reading due to the impact of the pandemic on their education. However, leaders have not yet identified these pupils or put the appropriate support in place.
- The leadership of SEND is effective. Leaders have made significant improvements to the quality of SEND support plans which help pupils to access learning. Whether pupils with SEND are learning at home or in school, teachers and teaching assistants use these plans effectively to make adaptations to the curriculum. This is so that these pupils receive the support that they need. Teaching assistants continued to work well with pupils remotely during the recent period of school closure. This helped pupils with SEND to keep up with their work.

- Throughout the spring term 2021, leaders successfully implemented a range of strategies to ensure that vulnerable pupils received wrap-around care and support. This was whether they were being educated at home or on site. When pupils were learning from home, staff made weekly video calls to support pupils' well-being. This has helped to foster strong relationships with families.
- The IEB understands the school well. It has a secure oversight of the progress that is being made against the key priorities for improvement. Members of the board value the transparency of the leadership team. They acknowledge that the pandemic has hampered the speed of school improvement. However, the IEB is determined that they will continue to support leaders to move the school forward.
- Leaders have welcomed support from two national leaders of education and an educational consultant. This support has enabled subject leaders to address the endemic weaknesses in the previous curriculum.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted on site. We spoke with you, the executive principal, the deputy principal, other senior leaders and members of the IEB, including the chair of the IEB. We held meetings with: middle leaders; teachers and teaching assistants; members of the support staff; groups of pupils; and two national leaders of education to discuss safeguarding and leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also reviewed curriculum plans and other documentation, including the minutes from IEB meetings. We completed a range of activities to check the effectiveness of safeguarding. We looked at the 49 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. This included the 100 free-text responses to Parent View. We also reviewed the 53 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the IEB, the chief executive officer of the Pendle Education Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Lancashire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Rachel Goodwin
Her Majesty's Inspector