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Liz Brook
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Dear Miss Brook

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Alanbrooke School

Following my remote inspection with Eleanor Belfield, 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 have serious weaknesses.

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 have serious weaknesses at its previous section 5 inspection. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in January 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:

- urgently address the weakness in curriculum development so that all subjects are well sequenced and pupils can build their knowledge over time
- establish pupils' new starting points as all pupils return to school after COVID-19 partial closures
- secure a permanent leadership structure to provide stability and capacity.

Context

- Since the last inspection, staffing has been through a significant period of change. The interim executive board of governors (IEB) and the local authority have provided stability to the school during this time. An interim headteacher is in post until the end of the summer term. Two teachers left the school during the autumn term and one new teacher was appointed in the spring term. Four new governors have joined the IEB since it was appointed in January 2020.
- Approximately 40% of all pupils attended school at the start of the spring term. This number gradually increased until around 60% of pupils were attending school on site.
- At the time of this inspection, there were a very small number of pupils who were being educated remotely whilst they were self-isolating.
- Leaders are managing staff absence at this time. This is not COVID-19 related.

Main findings

- Alanbrooke has faced substantial change over the last 15 months. During this time, the IEB has worked with tenacity to support the school. Leaders have made sure that pupils are able to access an education. However, the interim leadership team acknowledges that the curriculum requires much development
- In your January 2020 section 5 inspection report, leaders and the newly appointed IEB were challenged to establish a coherent, sequentially planned curriculum. This work was hindered significantly by COVID-19 and the recent staffing changes. As a result, many subject leaders are unable to articulate how pupils' knowledge builds over time. Learning is not fully planned from Reception through to Year 6.
- You are now working with external partners, including the local authority and the English Hub. This is providing subject leaders with training and support about the curriculum and subject leadership. The local authority has provided

special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) training and completed reviews of safeguarding with school leaders.

- Early reading is a priority for the interim headteacher. Training is underway to develop the knowledge and understanding of all staff. This will support a robust approach to the systematic delivery of phonics to pupils in the early years and key stage 1. Leaders are also aware of the importance of this approach for pupils in key stage 2 who are still struggling to learn to read.
- You have made it a priority to ensure that while self-isolating, pupils continue to have access to the current curriculum. This includes the delivery of paper-based learning packs if necessary.
- Leaders have plans in place to provide additional help for vulnerable pupils and those who require SEND support. However, the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator (SENDco) has a limited understanding of the starting points of these pupils on their return to school. Checks on what pupils with SEND know, remember and can do are planned but have not currently taken place.
- Members of the IEB are robust in their challenge and rigorous in the manner with which they hold leaders to account. They have provided extensive support. This has been instrumental in enabling the interim leadership team to implement many of the changes that have been necessary over the last four weeks. The IEB has worked with the new interim leadership team to build a positive relationship with the military to support the school community.
- Initially, the support provided by the local authority and other agencies saw little impact. COVID-19 affected the support the local authority was able to provide the school during the initial months of the pandemic. This has meant that improvements did not begin until more recently. One staff member spoke of learning more in the last 4 weeks than in the previous 12 months. This is indicative of the change of pace in school since the appointment of the interim headteacher.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, members of the IEB, representatives from the local authority and teachers to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also looked at recorded examples of live lessons, curriculum planning, governors' minutes, local authority audit records and participation records. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including nine free-text responses, and six staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the IEB, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for North Yorkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Zoe Lightfoot
Her Majesty's Inspector