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Katherine Turner
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Turner

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Chipping Sodbury School

Following my remote inspection with Lydia Pride, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 23 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. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in June 2018.

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 each subject's curriculum covers the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn over time.

Context

- Since the school's last section 5 inspection, several key staff have been appointed. A special educational needs coordinator and assistant headteacher have joined the school, and a new head of science was appointed.
- The school is expected to join a multi-academy trust on 1 April 2021.
- The school has enhanced provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).
- Approximately 80% of pupils were educated at home when the school was closed to most pupils at the start of the spring term. During this time, approximately 70% of vulnerable pupils attended on site. Over half of pupils with education, health and care (EHC) plans were learning on site.
- At the time of this inspection, nearly all pupils were attending on site.
- Leaders are managing a small number of staff who are absent due to shielding requirements related to COVID-19.

Main findings

- Leaders and governors were resolute in their determination to provide an education for pupils during the recent lockdown. Leaders improved remote education in response to parents' and pupils' feedback. Staff supported pupils to maintain daily routines and continuity of learning. Leaders carefully considered the needs of pupils and staff when planning the return of all pupils to school, resulting in a smooth transition to on-site learning.
- Leaders thought carefully about the curriculum to ensure that it reflects their ambition for pupils. They have broadened the key stage 3 curriculum so that pupils learn a wide range of subjects for longer. Subject leaders have developed curriculums that outline content. However, these are not yet sufficiently detailed to enable pupils to build successfully on what they have learned.
- Teachers assessed pupils' work during the recent period of remote education to find out what pupils know and understand. They have identified where there are gaps in pupils' knowledge and are adapting the curriculum accordingly. Teachers are supporting pupils in Years 11 and 13 to complete their examination courses. Leaders have suitable plans in place that balance the demands of the forthcoming assessments with pupils' well-being.

- Leaders have identified pupils who require additional support with reading and numeracy. Staff have put in place appropriate programmes to support these pupils. For example, pupils are following a carefully sequenced phonics programme that is helping them to improve their reading.
- Leaders have strengthened the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff have received training so they can better meet the needs of pupils with SEND. The SEND team has worked closely with pupils and parents to identify useful strategies to support pupils' learning. Sixth-form students with an EHC plan have been supported on site throughout the spring term. Staff from the Access Centre and across the school collaborate well to support pupils with ASD.
- Governors are ambitious for the school and have a secure knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses. They have provided additional support to leaders throughout the pandemic and have been mindful of the well-being of staff. Governors have worked well with leaders to bring about school improvement.
- The school has welcomed support from external sources, including the local authority and school improvement partner. They have helped leaders to make improvements to the curriculum.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, the chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also reviewed school documentation, sampled pupils' work and looked at remote lesson resources. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 74 free-text responses, and 79 staff questionnaires.

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

Yours sincerely

Tracey Reynolds
Her Majesty's Inspector