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Angela Quirk
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Miss Quirk

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Westfield Nursery and Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Janette Walker, 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 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 one judgement of requires improvement. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in January 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 subject leaders develop curriculum plans for subjects other than mathematics, science and history that carefully sequence the knowledge that you want pupils to know and remember
- train staff to deliver the spelling programme so that there is greater consistency in the teaching of spelling across the school.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, there have been considerable changes to staffing. In January 2021, you were appointed as executive headteacher. A head of school was appointed in February 2021. Two acting assistant headteachers have been appointed temporarily from within the school. Four teachers, one learning mentor and one administrator have also joined the school. An experienced governor has taken on the role of chair of the governing body. Two new governors have also taken up their posts.
- Approximately two thirds of pupils spent some time accessing their education at home during the spring term 2021, before the school reopened to all pupils. During the same period, around two thirds of vulnerable pupils and half of those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) were attending school regularly.
- At the time of this inspection, all pupils were attending school.

Main findings

- At the beginning of this term, you ensured that systems were in place for children to continue their education remotely. Whether learning at home or in school pupils have accessed the same curriculum. You and the staff have been persistent in encouraging pupils and their families to engage with their learning at home. As a result, the vast majority of pupils accessed remote education daily and continued to learn effectively. These systems are now well established and remain in place for any pupil who needs to access their education at home due to self-isolation.
- Prior to the start of the pandemic, leaders had made some progress in developing and improving the school's curriculum. For example, leaders had introduced a new mathematics curriculum across all year groups, including in the early years. During the spring term 2021, you carried out a review of the school's curriculum. Through this process you identified some weaknesses in curriculum planning. You and the staff are now making appropriate changes to improve curriculum plans in those subjects other than mathematics, science and history. Even so, subject leaders have more to do to ensure that curriculum plans set out precisely the knowledge that you want pupils to learn and the order in which you want them to learn this knowledge.

- Following pupils' recent return to school, you have prioritised the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. In these subjects, teachers are checking carefully what pupils know and remember of their previous learning. For example, in mathematics, teachers' checks have identified that most pupils have maintained their fluency with number facts. However, many pupils have forgotten how to apply this knowledge to solve problems. Teachers are providing pupils with more time to practise applying their knowledge of number facts to mathematical problems.
- In September 2020, leaders introduced a new curriculum for phonics and spelling. Teachers have checked the letters and sounds that younger pupils have remembered. Those pupils who need additional support are practising their letters and sounds regularly. Children in the early years are spending more time listening to rhymes and stories to reignite their love of books. Teachers have made sure that children and pupils read books that closely match the letters and sounds that they know. Plans are in place to introduce the new spelling curriculum in older year groups so that there is a consistent approach to the teaching of spelling across the school. Some staff are still to be trained appropriately to deliver the spelling curriculum.
- Throughout the pandemic, staff have remained vigilant about the well-being of vulnerable pupils. Those vulnerable pupils who have been learning at home are being provided with careful support to help them to settle back into school. The special educational needs co-ordinator has maintained close links with pupils, parents and carers to ensure that pupils with SEND get the support that they need. Those parents that shared their views with us during this inspection spoke highly of the support for pupils with SEND and their families.
- Members of the governing body are beginning to adopt a more strategic role. They have reorganised the way that they meet to improve their oversight of different aspects of the school's work. For instance, members of the governing body have plans to engage further with subject leaders so that governors can keep a closer check on how well the curriculum is improving. Governors are knowledgeable about the current circumstances. For example, they have kept a close eye on pupils' access to remote education.
- Subject leaders in English and mathematics value the support that they receive from local hubs. Specialist leaders from these hubs have helped to develop subject leaders' curriculum expertise. The local authority has provided funding so that subject leaders can benefit from working alongside their counterparts in the school's partner school.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke with you, the head of school, a group of subject leaders, representatives of the governing body, and with a

representative from the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also considered a range of documentation provided by you and other leaders, including curriculum plans, samples of pupils' work and minutes of the governing body meetings. We spoke with a group of older pupils and observed a group of younger pupils read to a trusted adult. We spoke with a small number of parents. We looked at 35 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including eight free-text responses, and 22 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 Cumbria. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Garry White
Her Majesty's Inspector