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Nicola Ware  
Headteacher  
Hunts Cross Primary School  
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Liverpool  
L25 0PJ

Dear Mrs Ware

### **Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Hunts Cross Primary School**

Following my remote inspection with Adam Sproston, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 19 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 was judged to require improvement at its previous section 5 inspection. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in October 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 the delays caused by the pandemic in implementing the new curriculum in subjects other than English and mathematics are overcome
- ensure that the governing body re-establish regular governors' meetings and that they maintain a closer oversight of the curriculum.

### **Context**

- When the school was closed to most pupils at the start of the spring term 2021, approximately two thirds of pupils were educated at home. One third of pupils were in school, which included most of the vulnerable pupils and almost three quarters of pupils with an education, health and care plan.
- At the time of this inspection, almost all pupils were in school.
- Leaders were not managing any significant staffing issues at the time of this inspection. A small proportion of staff were absent because of COVID-19.

### **Main findings**

- You and all staff have a clear ambition to improve the school's curriculum for the benefit of all pupils. The pandemic caused you to change some of your plans but not to lose sight of them. You have managed the challenges of partial school closures well and ensured that pupils' education continued, whether they learned at home or on site.
- Before the pandemic began, you had started to improve the school's curriculum. Using their recent training, all leaders redesigned the curriculum plans for their subject areas. Across all subjects, it is now clearer what pupils will learn and when they will learn subject content. Your current priority is to tackle the gaps in pupils' reading, writing and mathematics knowledge that have emerged during the pandemic.
- Teachers have checked what pupils have forgotten or missed while the school was closed to most pupils. They are using this information to make adaptations to the planned curriculum. Some subject content is being prioritised so that pupils can gain the most benefit from teaching time. For example, next term, specialist teachers will teach computing to younger pupils. This is to help these pupils catch up quickly on missed learning. Even so, these changes mean that, across a range of subjects, new curriculum plans will take longer to put in place than was originally planned.
- The early years leader works closely with staff at the local nursery. They have developed a shared approach to teaching early reading and mathematics.

Leaders have spent time together looking at what children know and can do in their final term in nursery. This helps teachers build on children's knowledge and skills as soon as they enter their Reception Year.

- You want all pupils to read well. You have trained all staff to deliver the reading curriculum, including the phonics programme, in a systematic way. Pupils get a chance to read a wide range of high-quality books. This is improving their fluency and understanding. These books match the sounds that they are learning. You acted quickly to check how well pupils were reading following the end of each partial school closure. You found that many pupils had gaps in their phonics knowledge. Teachers are helping pupils to catch up with phonics and, where needed, extra support is in place.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) works closely with staff and other professionals to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including those who are vulnerable. The SENCo also takes time to listen to the views of pupils with SEND. This helps these pupils to have a say in the education that they receive. All parents and carers of pupils with SEND, who completed Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire, agreed that staff provide pupils with the support that they need. This includes support for pupils' well-being, as well as their learning.
- You and other leaders provide governors with detailed reports about the education that pupils receive. This helps governors to carry out their roles. The pandemic has limited governors' opportunities to meet. Minutes from meetings show that governors ask questions about a range of matters. However, there is no record of how they challenge you and other leaders about the quality of the curriculum that you are currently providing.
- The local authority knows the school well. It has a strong, supportive relationship with you and your staff. The support from the local authority, as well as support from the mathematics hub, has helped you and other leaders to improve the curriculum in English and mathematics. The local authority has also helped to develop subject leaders' confidence in planning their curriculums. This has led to improved plans being in place across a range of subjects. You welcome the support that is offered. It has helped you to deliver the curriculum well in the current circumstances.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior and middle leaders, pupils, 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 looked at a wide range of documentation, including curriculum plans and minutes of governing body meetings. We talked to pupils and observed a Reception-aged child and pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 read to a trusted adult. We looked at 14 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 11 free-text responses, and 25 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 Liverpool. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jackie Stillings  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**