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10 May 2021

Mark Knowles  
Headteacher  
Coppice Junior School  
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West Midlands  
B92 9JY

Dear Mr Knowles

### **Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Coppice Junior School**

Following my remote inspection with Nick Turvey, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 24 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 two successive judgements of requires improvement. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in June 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:

- evaluate the impact of changes leaders have made, so that it is clear what is improving pupils' learning and what is not
- make sure that all subject plans clearly sequence what pupils need to know and remember in all subjects.

### **Context**

- You have been in post since just before the last inspection. The deputy headteacher is new to the role of special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) in the current academic year. The English leader has been appointed since the last inspection.
- Approximately three quarters of pupils were educated at home when the school was partially closed in the early part of the spring term 2021. Around eight out of ten vulnerable pupils attended school on site. Half of pupils with education, health and care plans attended on site during the same period.
- At the time of this inspection, all pupils were attending on site.

### **Main findings**

- Leaders and those responsible for governance have overseen a rapid development of remote education. They made sure that a broad and balanced curriculum was in place, both for pupils on site and for pupils learning remotely. Leaders thought carefully about which subjects were less successful when taught remotely. For instance, they identified some limitations to the teaching of art in the period when most pupils were learning at home. When the school reopened to all pupils, staff planned a short project for all classes to learn about the life and work of a famous artist to compensate for the missed learning. Teachers also have plans in place to identify aspects of the curriculum that pupils have missed and adjust teaching to cover these parts of the curriculum.
- By the start of the pandemic, leaders had put in place new schemes of work and strategies for teaching English, including reading, and for mathematics. There is some evidence that leaders' work is bringing about improvements in pupils' reading. Nevertheless, leaders have not fully evaluated the impact of the changes they have made. Leaders also believe that the school's own assessments show improvements in mathematics. However, changes made to mathematics have not been in place long enough for leaders to be confident of their impact.
- Leaders have undertaken a review of the curriculum and teaching since the last inspection. They have brought in a great many changes aimed at

improving these aspects. It is not fully clear what difference this work is making to pupils' learning.

- Curriculum planning covers all subjects. It is clearer and more precise in some subjects than others. For instance, planning in geography explains what pupils need to learn in different strands of the subject. In other subjects, such as history, the knowledge that pupils need to acquire is less precisely set out. In some subjects, such as music, and design and technology, leaders have not set out a clear progression of knowledge and skills. Leaders have not made sure that curriculum plans are of an equally high quality in all subjects.
- Other local schools have supported the school in its development of the reading curriculum. This has allowed school leaders to develop a common understanding of the teaching of reading throughout the school. The new whole-class approach to teaching reading provides a clear structure for teachers. However, this approach to delivering the reading curriculum has not been in place long enough for its full impact to be evident.
- Weaker readers are supported through the use of a 'reading scheme' and are given books that are at just the right level for them to read. Those pupils who still need intensive phonics teaching have this in one-to-one or small-group sessions.
- The SENCo has made sure that teachers understand their role in the education of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). She has ensured that pupils receive additional teaching in phonics and mathematics where needed, including during the period of partial school closure. Leaders believe that this has improved the learning for pupils with SEND. However, the changes are recent, and leaders are yet to evaluate their impact over time.
- Governors are ambitious for the school and its pupils. They know the school's current situation very well, including the provision of remote education. Governors understand their role and what they need to do to keep the school on track with its development. They are considerate of staff well-being.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, pupils, staff, representatives of those responsible for governance and a representative of the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also heard pupils read and looked at recorded learning materials and curriculum planning. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 47 free-text responses, and 24 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 Solihull. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Bryony Freeman  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**