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Dear Ms Ramsay

Additional monitoring inspection of Stantonbury International

Following my inspection with Matthew Haynes, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 16 and 17 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 special measures.

This monitoring inspection took place on site due to significant concerns about safeguarding.

The inspection took place because the school was judged to require special measures at its previous section 5 inspection. The school was last inspected 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 not taking effective action to provide education in the current circumstances.

Safeguarding is not effective.

Leaders and those responsible for governance should take further action to:

- ensure that pupils are safe by checking that:
 - the school site is safe
 - safeguarding records are complete
 - safeguarding training improves the knowledge and understanding of staff
- improve further pupils' behaviour and reduce the number of bullying incidents
- ensure that pupils, and particularly pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), who did not learn as well as others during the spring term when the school was only open to some children due to COVID-19 restrictions, are helped to catch up in all their subjects.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, the head of school, two deputy headteachers, three new assistant headteachers and eight new subject leaders have been appointed. A new chair of governors and vice-chair of governors have also joined the school. Plans for the school to be re-brokered from the Griffin Schools Trust to another multi-academy trust are currently underway.
- During the spring term, approximately a quarter of pupils were educated on site. Two fifths of vulnerable pupils and a similar proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans were educated on site during this period.
- At the time of this inspection, nine out of 10 pupils were attending on site. Very few pupils were being educated remotely. A small proportion of pupils had not returned to school when it reopened to all pupils following the third national lockdown. A small proportion of vulnerable pupils attend off-site alternative provision.

Main findings

- Leaders have not ensured that enough pupils have received an education during the current circumstances. Of the vulnerable pupils and pupils with SEND who were learning at home during the spring term, nearly a third did not participate fully enough in remote education, despite leaders' actions to improve their engagement. The same is true for other pupils. Leaders recognise that this means that when pupils returned to school in March 2021, too many pupils had important gaps in their learning. Leaders have plans in place to provide vulnerable pupils and those with SEND with extra support.
- Poor behaviour disrupts the learning of too many pupils. Bullying, serious behaviour incidents and disruption in lessons are too frequent. While pupils' behaviour appears to have improved over the last year, leaders' actions have

not been effective enough. Leaders have not analysed patterns of pupils' behaviour to evaluate what is working or what needs to change.

- The majority of parents and staff expressed concerns over the high incidence of bullying and poor behaviour. A substantial proportion of parents and staff do not feel that leaders have improved the school enough since the last inspection.
- Over the past year, leaders have prioritised increasing the number of permanent staff in school. Some pupils appreciate that there have been fewer supply teachers since September 2020. However, other pupils, including some in Year 13, said that staff absence has led to significant disruptions to their learning in some subjects. In these subjects, pupils are not confident that they will achieve what they should by the end of the year.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have invested in improving pupils' reading. This has been most successful in Years 7 to 9, where pupils get extra help with their reading. Pupils are encouraged to read regularly.
- Leaders have trained teachers to deliver the curriculum remotely. Staff recognise that this extra training has led to improvements in the quality of the school's remote education. The small proportion of pupils who continue to learn remotely access a range of resources provided by teachers, including recordings of lessons.
- Subject leaders have adapted the curriculum so that pupils learn more difficult topics while at school rather than remotely at home. In some subjects, such as history, topics have been taken out of the curriculum so that there is time for pupils to study remaining topics in greater depth. Staff have planned to assess what pupils know and remember in all subjects, now pupils are back in school. Teachers provide extra revision and support sessions for pupils in Year 11. Attendance at these sessions is rising.
- Although governors ask probing questions in their meetings, they have not yet held leaders to account well enough for the participation of pupils with SEND in remote education during the spring term. Governors monitored the quantity and range of work that was set for pupils during the spring term, while the school was only open to some children due to COVID-19 restrictions, by sampling online lessons and discussing leaders' plans with them.
- Trustees ensure that leaders are kept up to date with the government's guidance on managing schools throughout the pandemic. The trust also provides expertise from colleagues in the trust's other schools to support leaders in improving the curriculum and checking on their assessment systems. Some subject leaders from the other schools in the trust now work temporarily at Stantonbury International.

- Safeguarding is ineffective. While some improvements have been made, for example to the training staff receive, the culture of safeguarding is not strong enough and not all staff have understood the training. We found a range of evidence to indicate this. For instance, the record of the checks on the suitability of staff to work with children was not complete. Leaders do not support the most vulnerable pupils attending alternative provision effectively. Although quickly rectified by leaders, we found two serious safety hazards in one teaching building. Important safeguarding records are not complete, compliant or clear, including those related to allegations against members of staff. Furthermore, many parents do not feel their children are safe at the school, and many staff agree.
- Governors' monitoring of whether statutory safeguarding arrangements are in place is not strong enough. Although governors record in their meetings that they have read key government guidance on safeguarding, not all governors understand this statutory guidance. The local authority has provided support for the school and monitored progress regularly. However, the local authority rightly remains concerned about the school's safeguarding arrangements and culture.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted on site due to concerns about safeguarding. We spoke to you, the head of school, other senior leaders, four subject leaders, three governors (including the chair of governors), the chief executive officer of the Griffin Schools Trust, a representative from the local authority, several members of staff and three groups of pupils to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We walked around the school while pupils were in lessons and scrutinised a range of documentation. We also scrutinised a wide range of documentation related to safeguarding. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 142 free-text responses, and 95 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Griffin Schools Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Milton Keynes. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Harry Ingham
Her Majesty's Inspector