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Andrea Garcha
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Dear Mrs Garcha

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Hateley Heath Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Heather Simpson, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 10 and 11 February 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.

Following changes to government guidance and the imposition of COVID-19 (coronavirus) lockdown restrictions, 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 special measures at its previous section 5 inspection. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in January 2020.

Having considered all the evidence and taking into account the impact of COVID-19 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.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, senior leadership responsibilities have been revised. Consequently, there is new leadership of the curriculum, the early years foundation stage (EYFS) and provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- The school will join the Manor multi-academy trust (MAT) on 1 April 2021. The chief executive officer of the MAT has recently been co-opted on to the school's governing body.
- All pupils had to be educated remotely for two weeks in November 2020 because the school was closed due to COVID-19. Nearly 60% of pupils have had to be educated remotely at some other time during the autumn term 2020. Reception, Year 3 and Year 6 have been affected more than other year groups.
- At the time of inspection, 14% of pupils were being educated in school. Nearly 60% of vulnerable pupils were being educated in school, as were 50% of pupils with education, health and care plans.

Main findings

- You and your staff are working hard to provide pupils with education at this time, and your efforts are proving successful. You provide parents and pupils with helpful weekly and daily timetables of work. Teachers set appropriate work in all subjects. Staff check that pupils are engaging and provide regular feedback on the work that pupils have completed.
- You try to identify and address any factors that get in the way of pupils being able to access their education, especially when at home. For example, you have provided laptops and internet access for many families. Staff provide individual support for parents who speak English as an additional language. You provide printed packs of work for pupils who find prolonged screen time difficult. Consequently, most pupils are engaging well with their learning.
- You have successfully strengthened the leadership of several areas of the school since the previous inspection. These include the curriculum, the EYFS and provision for pupils with SEND. The education you are providing to pupils at this time has benefited as a result.
- At the time of the previous inspection, the school's curriculum was not fit for purpose. It is now. You have ensured that pupils study an appropriate range of subjects and that sufficient time is given to each. However, you recognise that there is more to be done to ensure that learning in all subjects builds logically from year to year. Teachers adapt content well for pupils who are learning remotely. For example, in science, a topic about 'materials' has focused on materials that can be found in the home.

- You encourage parents of vulnerable pupils to send them to school and the majority do. Pupils follow the same curriculum as their peers, and staff support them well. Staff work hard to assist vulnerable pupils who are working at home. They keep in regular contact with these pupils and families, visiting most each week. You ensure that pupils who need support from external services continue to get the help they need.
- Pupils with SEND are supported well, both in school and when working at home. In school, pupils with SEND receive support from teachers and teaching assistants. The special educational needs coordinator checks that the work teachers set for pupils with SEND who are at home is appropriate. Staff keep in close contact with pupils and parents, offering additional help whenever it is needed.
- You have placed a strong focus on reading since the previous inspection. In particular, you have made improving the teaching of phonics a top priority. All staff in the EYFS and key stage 1 have been trained well. You have invested in new reading books that match pupils' ability to decode. You are also encouraging pupils to read for pleasure and have invested in online books that pupils can read at home or in school. Although you recognise that there is more to be done, the teaching of reading is now effective.
- Governors know the school well. Consequently, they understand those areas of school life that have improved since the last inspection and those areas where there is more to be done. In particular, they are well informed about the school's efforts to provide education at this time. They are fulfilling their role well in providing good support and effective challenge to leaders.
- You have sourced effective support from several partners over recent months. The MAT has provided support with curriculum development and remote education. The local authority has assisted your improvements in the EYFS. An external consultant has supported your work to improve the teaching of phonics. In each of these areas, the external support is proving successful.

Evidence

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

We also scrutinised curriculum plans, minutes of governing body meetings and resources provided for pupils' remote education. We listened to some pupils read. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including four free-text responses, and 22 staff questionnaire responses.

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

Yours sincerely

Alun Williams
Her Majesty's Inspector