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Alun Williams
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Dear Mr Williams

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Writhlington School

Following my remote inspection with Jennifer Gibbs, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 2 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 at its previous section 5 inspections. 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:

- implement an effective literacy programme in every subject area so that pupils can read and write about these subjects successfully.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, you were appointed as the interim headteacher. A new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and an assistant headteacher responsible for disadvantaged pupils were appointed. In addition, a new chair of governors and two governors joined the governing body.
- Approximately 20% of pupils, including one Year 9 class, accessed remote education last year.
- At the time of this inspection, around 90% of pupils were learning from home. Approximately 50% of pupils with education, care and health plans, alongside 10% of vulnerable and key-worker pupils, were attending school.

Main findings

- You have worked hard to make sure that all pupils access education in the current circumstances. You and your staff have planned the curriculum well so that pupils can access it regardless of where they are learning. Where necessary, you have changed the sequence of learning in some subjects to meet the challenges posed by remote learning. For example, you rightly changed the sequence of lessons in chemistry to enable pupils to conduct experiments at school.
- You and your leadership team have designed a curriculum across the range of subjects that builds pupils' knowledge and skills from key stage 3 to key stage 5. Despite this, you have identified that weaker literacy skills for some pupils remain a barrier to accessing the curriculum successfully. Although you have introduced new approaches to reading, your plans to improve the teaching and learning of literacy across the curriculum have not progressed as rapidly.
- You have made sure that pupils are assessed routinely both at home and at school. This has enabled staff to tackle gaps in pupils' knowledge as they teach the curriculum. Year 11 pupils are currently revising their learning across different subjects. This approach ensures that pupils are secure in their knowledge and skills before they move on to the next stage in their education.
- Vulnerable pupils and key-worker children who study at school follow the same curriculum as those studying remotely. Pupils receive additional support if they find lessons difficult. Across the curriculum, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive support and resources to help

them learn well. For example, the use of videos to teach lessons across the curriculum is helping pupils to study at their own pace and secure their understanding before moving on to new topics.

- You have established effective monitoring systems to check pupils' learning whether they are studying in school or at home. Most pupils engage well regardless of how they access education. Leaders know which pupils are not learning well and act swiftly to resolve the issue through additional support.
- You have adapted the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils. For example, you have prioritised the teaching of healthy eating as you have identified issues among pupils during the pandemic. You have rightly focused on training for staff to improve the quality of teaching and learning in PSHE, while identifying that more time is required for the PSHE curriculum to be implemented successfully.
- The trust plays an important role in helping the school to improve the quality of education. The mathematics curriculum is a strong example of the impact of the trust's support. Developed through collaboration with other schools, it is well sequenced, enabling pupils to develop strong mathematical knowledge and skills. A range of helpful resources and routine assessment support pupils to practise what they have learned and prepare them for the next stage in their education.
- Governors bring a range of expertise to their roles. They understand the school's priorities and the work leaders are doing. They gather a range of evidence to monitor the impact of leaders' actions and hold them to account.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, four governors, including the chair of the governing body, the SENCo and a number of subject leaders to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also spoke to two groups of pupils, looked at examples of pupils' work and looked at examples of remote lessons. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 59 free-text responses, and 73 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer of Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bath and North East Somerset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Susan Aykin
Her Majesty's Inspector