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Owen Rhodes
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Dear Mr Rhodes

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Weeting Church of England Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Katherine Douglas, 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.

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 has received two successive judgements of requires improvement. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in May 2019.

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.

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

- provide the subject training that staff require to ensure that they have a secure knowledge of the curriculum they are planning and delivering.

Context

- You joined the school as executive headteacher in September 2019. There have been further changes made to the leadership structure. There is a deputy executive headteacher and an assistant executive headteacher who work across the Trinity Partnership of which the school is a member. There is a new chair of the local governing board.
- During the autumn term 2020, no class 'bubbles' were sent home. Only a few pupils were taught remotely when they had to self-isolate with their families.
- At the time of this inspection, 89% of all pupils were being educated at home. All the pupils you identify as vulnerable attend the school site for their learning. There were no pupils with an education, health and care plan on the school roll at the time of this inspection.

Main findings

- Leaders have made it a priority to ensure that plans are in place for pupils to receive an education, whether at school or remotely. Working with the trust and governors, you have made sure that leaders are regularly reviewing the remote education offer and adapting the school's curriculum plans.
- When you were appointed, leaders reviewed the curriculum in all subject areas. The school's curriculum plans identify what pupils need to know and the key vocabulary they need to help them to learn. Reading is a high priority for the school. Leaders have chosen specific texts and books that link to the subjects pupils study.
- Partial closures of the school, owing to COVID-19, have slowed the pace of implementing the curriculum leaders have planned. You know what you want to achieve to ensure that the curriculum is fully developed throughout the school. In a few subjects, teachers have not yet received the training they need to help them teach these areas well.
- Teachers provide pupils with work from a range of subjects. However, there is a greater focus on reading, writing and mathematics. This is to ensure that pupils have the basic knowledge and skills in these subject areas. Teachers are expected to plan a similar timetable for pupils, whether at school or at home. This means that pupils, regardless of where they work, receive the same learning opportunities.

- Leaders have chosen to amend a few aspects of the curriculum, where subjects are not easily delivered remotely, such as computing and physical education. Teachers plan to check what pupils remember when they return to school. They will teach pupils the important things they need to know to help them catch up.
- Before this current national lockdown, leaders had introduced a new approach to the teaching of early reading skills. Teachers have adapted these plans so they can be delivered to children and pupils at home. Early years children and pupils in Year 1 continue to receive daily phonics teaching. They are provided with books that will help them to practise the sounds they have been learning to read.
- Leaders know their vulnerable pupils well. All pupils who are identified as vulnerable attend school for their education. Trained staff provide additional help to support pupils' well-being. Vulnerable pupils receive greater support for their learning. Pupils told us they welcomed the feedback they receive from their teachers. This helps them to understand how well they are progressing in their learning.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) regularly checks the learning that is in place for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). She liaises with teachers, support staff and external agencies to ensure that teaching is adapted for those pupils learning at home. Additional interventions continue for pupils. The SENCo has frequent communication with parents to find the best way to support pupils with SEND during this time. This is helping to motivate pupils, as well as keep them on track with their learning.
- Governors continue to receive information about the school's remote education provision from school leaders and the trust. They use this information to question how well pupils are accessing learning remotely. Some governors are new to their role. Working with the trust, they are developing their understanding of how to balance the level of support and challenge they provide, so leaders are held to account.
- The trust understands the challenges faced by school leaders. It has worked closely with the new executive headteacher to develop the capacity of leadership in the school. Subject leaders have received training to help develop the school's curriculum plans. They check the quality of leaders' remote education offer and provide timely advice to support its improvement.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We held meetings with the executive headteacher and other senior leaders, staff, representatives of the local governing board, including the chair and the multi-academy trust chief executive officer,

director of education and school performance director to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also reviewed school curriculum plans, samples of pupils' work, the school website, online teaching resources and remote education. We took account of nine responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaires. We looked at 12 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including eight free-text responses.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of The Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Ely, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Norfolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Steve Mellors
Her Majesty's Inspector