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Martin Farmer
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mr Farmer

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Bredenbury Primary School

Following my remote inspection of your school on 25 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 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 October 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:

- develop and refine curriculum plans, particularly in the foundation subjects, so that you make clear what you want pupils to know and remember over time
- focus on developing the quality of teaching and supporting staff to identify and address gaps in learning so that pupils can catch up and keep up.

Context

- Since the previous inspection there have been significant changes in senior leadership at the school. You were appointed as executive headteacher in January 2020. You worked with another local primary headteacher to jointly lead and manage the school until the first lockdown in March 2020. A new head of school took up post from September 2020. Three new governors have been recruited.
- Between the start of January and 5 March 2021, approximately a third of pupils were educated at home. More than half of vulnerable pupils and almost all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) were attending on site.
- At the time of this inspection, there are no pupils being educated remotely.

Main findings

- Since the last inspection, leaders have stabilised the school and made a positive start to improving the quality of education. Parents and staff say that the school is improving quickly. Pupils want to come to school and enjoy their learning. You have developed a 'can do' attitude across the school community. You have not allowed the COVID-19 pandemic to hinder your work on developing the curriculum or from providing an education in the current circumstances.
- The new head of school has worked quickly to establish a long-term curriculum plan. Together, you identified that pupils had gaps in learning mainly because of historical weak teaching and previous low expectations at the school. Using this information, you rightly prioritised work in reading, mathematics, science and physical education. These subjects are now carefully planned and sequenced. You adapt and refine the plans as they are implemented, and as you identify further gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- Teachers continually check what pupils know and can do. A range of assessment tasks and standardised tests are used to support teachers' assessment. These assessments show that many pupils need more practice with basic skills such as reading, number work, grammar, spelling and punctuation. Leaders and teachers strive to help pupils catch up with their lost learning.

- Staff know their pupils well and provide effective support for vulnerable pupils. During the recent national lockdown, all vulnerable pupils were encouraged to come to school, and many did. Teachers provided devices and extra help for those learning at home. For example, writing lessons were put in place for reluctant writers. This extra support has helped these pupils to keep up.
- Pupils are studying all their usual subjects. You have developed a two-year rolling programme of themes such as Our Planet and Bright Lights, Super Sounds. Work is underway to identify exactly what you want pupils to know and remember in subjects such as history, geography, art and music. You intend that the foundations for these subjects are laid in the early years. This work is at the early stage of development.
- Leaders are passionate about developing a love of reading. You ensure that pupils have access to a broad range of fiction and non-fiction texts. You link key texts to your literacy curriculum. Teachers recommend books to pupils, and this is helping to widen their reading experiences. You have introduced a systematic approach for the teaching of phonics. Following the national lockdown, you noted that some pupils in key stage 1 had gaps in their phonics knowledge. You make sure that these pupils have extra support individually or in small groups.
- At the start of this academic year, leaders made provision for pupils with SEND a key priority. You rightly focus on improving the quality of teaching in the classroom so that all pupils' needs are met. Interventions are also in place to help pupils catch up and keep up. For example, an afternoon group addresses misconceptions that pupils have from their morning work. You make sure that all staff understand how to support pupils with SEND. Parents appreciate the way you keep them informed about any concerns regarding their child.
- Governors acted quickly in response to the issues identified at the last inspection. They take a more strategic approach now and are no longer involved in the day to day running of the school. They receive timely reports through the governor hub. They use this information to question and challenge leaders. They are well informed about curriculum developments and check the quality of provision, such as the remote learning offer.
- The school has received effective support from the local authority through a National Leader of Education. Governors have also appointed a school improvement partner to work with the head of school. This is having a positive impact on curriculum development. Leaders are outward looking and keen to engage and work with other partners. They are open to challenge and welcome support.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. I spoke to you, the head of school, two governors, including the chair, and a group of pupils. I listened to pupils read and discussed reading with a member of staff. I also spoke to a representative from the local authority and the school's improvement partner to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

I reviewed curriculum plans, minutes of governors' meetings and curriculum information on the school's website. I looked at responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including 26 free-text responses, and six 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 Herefordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Nicola Harwood
Her Majesty's Inspector