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Steph Blake
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Dear Ms Blake

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of High Street Primary Academy

Following my remote inspection 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 have serious weaknesses.

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 have serious weaknesses at its previous section 5 inspection. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in November 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.

Context

- Since the last inspection, you have been appointed interim headteacher. A special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) was appointed and is also leading the early years setting. Reach South Academy Trust has seconded leaders of mathematics, phonics, reading and remote education to the school. An interim executive board (IEB) replaced the governing body and has since merged with the IEB at Millbay Academy. There have also been changes to teaching and support staff.
- In the autumn term 2020, one class of children in the early years experienced a period of remote education due to COVID-19.
- At the time of the inspection, approximately 53% of pupils were being educated at home. 75% of vulnerable pupils and 42% of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) were studying on site.

Main findings

- Since the last inspection, you and your leadership team have focused on developing the quality of the curriculum. You and your staff have worked hard to make sure that pupils study the same curriculum remotely and at school. You have made sure that all pupils have access to technology so that they can receive an appropriate education.
- By the start of the pandemic, you and your staff had established an effective approach to the teaching of phonics. You have focused on developing the quality of teaching and learning of early reading through training and coaching. You have also ensured that a large proportion of pupils receive one-to-one support to improve their reading skills both on site and remotely. As a result, pupils are more enthusiastic and confident about reading.
- Your staff read high-quality, engaging texts to pupils daily. In early years, children listen to a breadth of stories every day. However, pupils do not use the language in the books they read to inform and improve their writing consistently. You have rightly identified the importance of developing pupils' vocabulary and grammar so that they are able to read more complex texts and write more proficiently. Consequently, you have introduced approaches to the teaching and learning of language from early years to Year 6. However, these improvements have been slowed by the pandemic.
- You have identified gaps in pupils' knowledge of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. As a result, you have revised the mathematics curriculum to ensure that pupils study these key concepts regularly. In early years, you identified gaps in children's knowledge about number and have rightly embedded this in the early years curriculum so that children are ready for key stage 1. Changes to your mathematics curriculum now provide frequent opportunities for pupils to practise their reasoning and problem-

solving skills. Teachers are working to ensure these changes are fully embedded throughout the school.

- You have revised the wider curriculum with care and attention so that that pupils build their knowledge and skills in a range of subjects. For example, the history curriculum enables pupils to develop their knowledge of empires and to source information from a range of texts. The structure of the curriculum enables pupils to revisit key concepts so that they are secure in their understanding before moving on to new topics. However, you recognise that the Spanish curriculum is not as well structured. You plan to revise the content and assessment methods in this subject so that pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The majority of vulnerable pupils, alongside a small proportion of key worker pupils, are attending school. You and your staff frequently monitor pupils' engagement and progress, whether they are studying remotely or in school. You address emerging issues quickly to enable pupils to learn the curriculum. For example, you make sure that pupils receive additional support where necessary.
- You ensure that staff adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils with SEND so that all receive an appropriate education. The SENCo has improved the identification of SEND in the early years. This has enabled staff to provide more precise support so that these children are better prepared for key stage 1. The SENCo has focused on training staff to develop a high-quality, inclusive curriculum for pupils with SEND.
- Governors receive monthly independent reports about the quality of the curriculum, including remote education. Together, with information provided by the trust and the school, governors ask challenging questions and hold you and other leaders to account.
- The trust has enabled effective collaboration between leaders and staff at your school and Millbay Academy. Through coaching and mentoring, you have structured the curriculum so that pupils learn more and remember more. Additionally, leaders seconded from the trust have been pivotal in supporting improvements to the curriculums in reading, phonics and mathematics.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. I spoke to you, other senior leaders, curriculum leaders, pupils, a member of the IEB and the director of primary education at Reach South Academy Trust to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

I also listened to pupils read, looked at curriculum plans, lesson resources and pupils' work. I looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 13 responses to the staff questionnaire.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the IEB, chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Reach South multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Plymouth. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Susan Aykin
Her Majesty's Inspector