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James Horspool
Interim Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mr Horspool

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Mayfield School

Following my remote inspection with Christopher Stevens, 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 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 May 2018.

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

- The leadership team has been restructured since the last inspection. A new interim executive headteacher and an assistant headteacher have been appointed. Two members of the interim executive board (IEB) have resigned. One new member has joined the board. The school plans to join a multi-academy trust (MAT) next term.
- During the autumn term 2020, approximately half of the pupils had to work at home at some point because of COVID-19.
- All pupils at the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. At the time of this inspection, approximately one fifth of pupils were being educated on site.

Main findings

- Leaders introduced a new curriculum in September 2020. In their planning, leaders consider the skills and knowledge which pupils will need by the age of 19. This includes the development of life skills and being able to live independently. Leaders plan the curriculum to make sure that pupils progressively acquire these skills and knowledge over time.
- The curriculum is individualised. It is based on the targets and outcomes in pupils' EHC plans. Because of this, pupils accessing a remote education experience a curriculum broadly similar to their usual curriculum. Teachers have had to make some changes. For example, in the vocational courses, teachers have changed the order in which some units are delivered. They have found that some units are easier than others for pupils to do when they are learning at home.
- Staff are in regular contact with pupils and their families at home. They gather information on pupils' well-being. Leaders use this information in their weekly meetings to discuss pupils. These discussions result in some pupils getting extra help when they are at home. This support also helps some pupils to return to school. As a result, the numbers of pupils on site is gradually increasing over time.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. All pupils in Year 11 intend to stay on into the school's sixth form. Leaders say this is appropriate as they can offer pupils the right pathways based on their needs. Almost all of the students in Year 14 have appropriate provision identified for when they leave school. So, over time, very few pupils have not been in education, employment or training. This includes pupils with the most complex needs.
- Leaders have rightly placed developing pupils' communication skills at the heart of their curriculum plans. Staff are providing extra help for parents so

that they can support the development of their child's communication at home. This help includes 'how to' guides, followed by regular telephone calls home to check how things are going. Leaders say parents value this support.

- Leaders are making sure that pupils in school and at home continue to develop their phonics skills. However, leaders know that the delivery of phonics is inconsistent across the school. Recently, they have started to address this.
- Staff know their pupils well. They speak to pupils and their parents regularly. This helps them to identify pupils and families who need extra help with their learning. For example, they know that some pupils with autism spectrum disorder find it difficult to join in with live lessons. Teachers, therefore, send work packs home for these pupils. They also make sure that pupils who need a work tray have one at home.
- Leaders recognise the extra risks pupils may face when working at home. This includes when working online. As a result, they have provided appropriate training to all staff on how to keep pupils safe.
- Members of the IEB show a good understanding of the main aims of the school's curriculum. This includes the ways in which pupils are being prepared for the next stage in their education. Members of the IEB have checked that the school's remote education is in line with current government guidelines.
- The school works closely with the MAT which they plan to join in the summer term. Effective support is being given by the MAT in the development of the new curriculum. This includes support to leaders in the development of literacy, reading and mathematics. The school's improvement partner makes regular visits to the school. Leaders find these visits useful. They are helping leaders to identify how they can further improve the education which they are providing in the current circumstances. For example, how leaders can get better at checking the quality of work being sent home and how they assess pupils' work.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, senior leaders, staff, members of the IEB, a representative of the local authority and representatives of the MAT which the school plans to join, to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also looked at pupils' work, some pre-recorded lessons and minutes from meetings of the IEB. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and 37 staff questionnaires.

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

Yours sincerely

Lesley Yates
Her Majesty's Inspector