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Mark Melling
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Melling

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Brindle Gregson Lane Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Tim Vaughan, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), 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 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 was judged to require improvement at its previous section 5 inspection. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in April 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 the use of assessment systems across the curriculum to identify what knowledge pupils have forgotten, and use this to plan pupils' new learning
- improve subject leaders' knowledge of the early years so that that they can better plan the key stage 1 subject curriculums.

Context

- Since the last inspection, two teachers have left the school. Two members of the governing body have resigned. A new staff governor has been appointed.
- Approximately two fifths of all pupils were educated at home in the spring term before the school reopened to all pupils. During the same period, approximately one third of vulnerable pupils attended school. For every 10 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), approximately eight pupils attended school.
- At the time of this inspection, most pupils were attending school. A small proportion of pupils were being educated remotely.

Main findings

- Prior to the pandemic, you and the senior leaders had begun to redesign the curriculum. You identified that the previous curriculum did not allow pupils to develop essential knowledge in a wide range of subjects. As a result, you and subject leaders have improved the curriculum planning in several subjects, including English, history and geography. However, the implementation of these plans faltered at the outset of the pandemic. During the first period when schools were closed to most pupils, the curriculum offer was reduced as the delivery of English and mathematics took precedence. This hindered leaders' ability to put their new curriculums for a broader range of subjects into place.
- The redesign and improvements of the school's curriculum that began prior to the pandemic have been further delayed because subject leaders do not have a secure understanding of the early years curriculum. As a result, curriculum plans for key stage 1 do not build on the skills and knowledge that children acquire by the end of the Reception Year.
- Since the autumn term 2020, the staff have developed and improved the remote education offer. As teachers have become more proficient in delivering remote education, pupils are now studying more subjects. Since the autumn term 2020, there has been a renewed focus on delivering learning in subjects such as art and music. This supports pupils to catch up on content that was not taught when they were being educated remotely in the summer term 2020. You have ensured that pupils, including vulnerable pupils and those with SEND, have had access to suitable electronic devices. As a result,

pupils who are currently self-isolating can continue to access education remotely.

- Teachers have systems in place to identify the knowledge that they want pupils to learn in English and mathematics. This helps teachers to check what pupils have learned and remembered. This information is used to plan new learning. This is particularly useful to plan support for vulnerable pupils and those with SEND in English and mathematics. This is not the case in other subjects because teachers have not developed systems to help them check what knowledge pupils may have forgotten of their prior learning.
- Pupils in school, and those working remotely, continue to receive their usual phonics and reading programme. Pupils have access to books and online reading resources. These books enable pupils to practise new sounds and read unfamiliar words. Staff have received training in the delivery of reading and phonics. This helps them to support children in the early years and older pupils to catch up with their reading and phonics if they fall behind.
- Vulnerable pupils and those with SEND receive effective support in school and when working remotely. Parents and carers are appreciative of the staff's efforts to support their children's learning and well-being. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has trained teachers and support staff well. This has helped these staff to better meet the specific needs of pupils. The SENCo continues to work with a range of services to ensure that children with SEND receive specialist support.
- In recent months, governors have developed their expertise. This means that they have a secure understanding of their roles to support and hold school leaders to account. They know the school well. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, they have continued to fulfil their responsibilities. They have provided strong challenge to you and school leaders about the remote education offer. They have held you to account in relation to the delayed implementation of the wider curriculum plans. Governors ensure that vulnerable pupils and those with SEND are well cared for and challenged academically.
- The local authority has worked closely with you and other leaders in recent months. They have been instrumental in the improvements of the governance. They have helped you to further improve the support that is offered to pupils with SEND. Due to your retirement at the end of the spring term, the local authority has identified appropriate support to strengthen the school's leadership capacity. They have put plans in place to support the deputy headteacher in his new role as acting headteacher in the summer term.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders and a group of teachers and support staff. As well as this, we spoke to pupils and listened to them read to a trusted adult. We met with two representatives of the local authority and four members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also reviewed school curriculum plans and scrutinised minutes of governing body minutes. We looked at the 65 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including the 64 free-text responses, and the 10 responses to the staff questionnaire.

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

Yours sincerely

John Donald
Her Majesty's Inspector