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16 February 2021

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Dear Miss Nussey

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Paget Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Rob Hackfath, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 27 and 28 January 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 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.

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

- ensure that the weakest readers receive the support they need to catch up quickly.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, two leadership posts have been covered temporarily due to planned staff absence. Leadership roles have been reviewed to sharpen the focus on the curriculum. One new governor has joined the governing body.
- During autumn 2020, approximately two thirds of pupils experienced at least one period of remote education because of COVID-19. This included one class of Year 2 pupils and all pupils in the school's resource base.
- At the time of this inspection, the school was only open to vulnerable pupils and the children of key workers. Approximately one quarter of pupils were attending school. Three quarters of pupils were learning remotely. Approximately two thirds of vulnerable pupils are being educated on site. Approximately one third of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are attending school.
- At the time of this inspection, no teaching staff were absent due to COVID-19.

Main findings

- You have ensured that all pupils can receive an education during this time of national lockdown. Where necessary, you have provided pupils with the technology they need to take part in online learning at home. Even so, some pupils were slow to engage. You and the pastoral team have been swift to address this. As a result, the number of pupils accessing education is rising rapidly.
- Before the partial closure of schools in March 2020, you had started to review the curriculum. Subject leaders are continuing this work. Curriculum plans now identify the knowledge and skills leaders want pupils to learn. In some subjects, plans break learning down into small steps. For example, in mathematics and personal, social and health education. This is making it easier for teachers to adapt planning in the current circumstances. In some other subjects and in the early years, plans are less well developed.
- There is now a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics. Staff know the order in which to teach sounds. You are ensuring that pupils in the early years, key stage 1 and Year 3 have access to direct instruction every day. Teaching matches the sounds pupils know. However, the weakest readers do not get the extra practise they need to catch up quickly. This includes pupils in school and those working remotely. Furthermore, older pupils who are in

the early stages of learning to read are not receiving the direct instruction or practise they need. These pupils are at risk of falling further behind.

- In most subjects, pupils working at home and school study the same content. You are adapting the curriculum to make this possible. For example, in English, pupils are studying writing genres in a different order to previous years. In physical education, the planned curriculum is on pause. Instead, pupils are taking part in challenges to promote their physical health. In these subjects, teachers continue to teach content in a logical sequence.
- Teachers timetable lessons so that pupils in each year group access 'live' teaching at different times. They set 'assignments' for pupils to complete independently. Some of these tasks enable pupils to build their knowledge step by step. However, others are too open ended, which results in less-purposeful learning. Teachers expect the same standard of work from pupils working at home and school. They are starting to make checks on how well pupils are learning remotely.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has a secure knowledge of pupils with high-level needs. Skilled staff are ensuring that pupils in the resource base continue to learn. A large proportion of other pupils with SEND are working remotely, and a small number are not accessing education at all. These pupils need more support with their learning.
- Governors have an accurate understanding of what the school does well and what needs to improve. They have changed the way in which they work to focus on the school's current priorities. Governors are knowledgeable about the education that pupils are receiving. This is because you keep them up to date with detailed information. Governors are supportive of your drive to put pupils' emotional and mental health needs at the heart of the school's work.
- A school improvement partner meets with you and senior leaders each half term. They check on the actions you are taking and the difference these are making. This helps you to prioritise. Some subject leaders have received support to develop their leadership skills. As a result, these leaders are better able to make checks on curriculum planning and delivery. Aspects of planned work are on hold due to COVID-19 restrictions. This has slowed some improvements, for example in the early years.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other leaders to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown. These meetings involved the curriculum leader, early years leader, reading leader, SENCo and five subject leaders. We held discussions with the chair of the governing body and three governors, as well as two representatives of the local authority.

We also met with a group of pupils and a group of staff. We listened to a small number of pupils read to a familiar adult. We also spoke with the pastoral support team. We examined the school's curriculum plans and reviewed some examples of remote education.

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

Yours sincerely

Claire Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector