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Dear Mrs Boulter

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of The Welbourn Church of England Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Helen Williams, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 18 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.

This 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 September 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:

- refine curriculum planning so that the knowledge pupils need to learn, and the order in which it needs to be taught, is in place for all subjects
- check that the school's curriculum is helping pupils know and remember subject content.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, the number of classes has reduced from four to three. There have been very few changes to staffing since the previous inspection. A temporary teacher is currently covering a maternity leave.
- The governing body has appointed a new chair of governors and four new governors. The governing body is full.
- During the early spring term 2021, before the school reopened to all pupils, the number of pupils in school increased from one quarter to approximately a half. This included most of the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are vulnerable.
- At the time of the inspection all pupils were being taught on site.

Main findings

- During the spring term, leaders made sure that pupils at home and in school continued to learn. Teachers followed their usual planning with minor adaptations. For example, teachers changed some science content as pupils at home did not have the resources they needed. Since the school has fully reopened, there has been a 'business as usual' approach to teaching the curriculum. Leaders have made pupils' well-being a priority by giving them time to talk about how they are feeling as they return to school.
- During the national lockdown restrictions, teachers kept a close eye on what pupils were learning, regardless of whether they were at home or in school. Teachers have identified where there are gaps in what pupils' know and remember. Children get additional support to help them to catch up.
- Before the pandemic, leaders had started to develop a new curriculum. Subject leaders have received support to develop the curriculum in their subjects. Curriculum plans set out what pupils need to know in most subjects. Knowledge is planned to build on what the pupils already know. Leaders are refining curriculum plans for music and modern foreign languages. Due to the restrictions of the pandemic, leaders have not fully checked the impact the new curriculum is making on what pupils can remember.

- Leaders have introduced a new programme to teach phonics. There is a consistent approach to teaching pupils to read. During the period when schools were only open to some children due to COVID-19 restrictions, pupils at home and in school continued to learn new sounds. Leaders set up a temporary library in the school's bicycle shed so that pupils could borrow books.
- During the recent lockdown, the special educational needs coordinator provided additional support for pupils with SEND. She now has a better understanding of their needs. Leaders responded to feedback from parents. For example, teachers adapted tasks for pupils learning from home so that there was less emphasis on written work.
- The governing body has continued to meet regularly during the past year. Governors checked that pupils were able to access education during the recent lockdown. They have supported the school to develop its curriculum. Governors ask questions about how the curriculum is implemented. They have not checked for themselves that the curriculum is making a difference to what pupils know and can do in every subject.
- The local authority and another external partner provide valuable support to the school. They have worked with the headteacher to develop staff subject knowledge and confidence in their roles. They have an accurate view of the school's current performance and know what the school needs to do next to improve.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, three curriculum leaders, a small group of pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6, the leader for pupils with SEND, the chair and vice-chair of governors, a representative of the local authority, and a national leader of education to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils in the current circumstances.

We also listened to pupils in Reception and in Years 1, 2 and 3 read. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 18 free-text responses, and 13 staff questionnaires.

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

Yours sincerely

Caroline Poole
Ofsted Inspector