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Mrs Laura Snow
Head of Academy
Strand Primary Academy
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Dear Mrs Snow

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Strand Primary Academy

Following my remote inspection with Alison Stephenson, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 04 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.

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 three successive judgements of requires improvement. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in October 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

- Since the last section 5 inspection, there have been substantial changes to staffing. Most leaders are new to their current roles.
- Across the autumn term 2020, Reception and Year 6 'bubbles' were closed and pupils were educated remotely during a period of self-isolation. A small number of other pupils also had to work from home.
- At the time of this inspection, approximately a third of pupils were being educated on site. Approximately half of the school's vulnerable pupils and over two thirds of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) were accessing their education in school.

Main findings

- Leaders have been developing their curriculum since the last inspection. You identified vocabulary and communication as potential barriers to pupils' learning. With this in mind, you introduced a book-led approach and have placed reading at the heart of the curriculum. Phonics has been a priority and all staff have received training.
- The remote learning offer consists of live lessons and a menu of activities which can be completed independently. Pupils study a broad range of subjects and have regular story time sessions. The remote learning offer is similar to the school's usual curriculum. Leaders have prioritised essential knowledge which pupils need for subsequent learning. Some units of work have been condensed or adapted. For example, practical aspects which require specialist equipment are to be taught when pupils return to school and can access the resources they need. 'Wellbeing Wednesdays' are included to provide some respite and an alternative to screen-based learning and provide opportunities for more creative and physical aspects of the curriculum.
- You are aware of the gaps which some pupils have in their learning. You are making sure that remote teaching includes careful teacher modelling and instruction. Along with regular checks on pupils' understanding, this is supporting pupils in securing important knowledge.
- Vulnerable pupils who are at school have the same curriculum offer as those at home but with additional face-to-face support. Pupils at home who need extra support do not miss out, for example, staying on the call at the end of a live session to gain further practice.

- You have prioritised reading since the last inspection. Staff value the training they have received and can see how the new and consistent approach is enabling pupils to make better progress. Leaders have been determined to make sure that no ground is lost with the newly implemented early reading curriculum due to remote learning. Books have continued to go home, both for pupils to practice decoding and for adults to read aloud to them. Pupils who are struggling to learn to read, including those in key stage 2, are continuing to access phonics teaching and additional support. This is helping pupils to catch up with the expected pace of the phonics programme.
- Pupils with SEND are receiving the same support, interventions and access to external agencies as they would normally. Regular checks on their progress are made to prevent them from falling any further behind.
- The trust has provided a wide range of challenge and support for leaders. Devices have been provided to increase pupils' engagement in remote learning. A continued focus on the quality of the remote learning offer and its impact on pupils' understanding is having a positive effect. Training and staff development, for example in early reading, are also helping to improve the quality of the school's curriculum.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, the multi-academy trust deputy chief executive officer, and a sample of staff to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also listened to pupils read and watched clips of a sample of recorded remote lessons. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including three free-text responses.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of Delta Academies Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for North East Lincolnshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kirsty Godfrey
Her Majesty's Inspector