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Gareth Ivett
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Dear Mr Ivett

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Daventry Hill School

Following my remote inspection with Christine Watkins, 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 have serious weaknesses.

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 June 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:

- further develop the curriculum pathway for pupils with more complex needs.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, 18 new members of staff have been appointed and eight key members of staff have left the school. Two new governors have joined the governing body.
- All pupils who attend the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Approximately half of pupils were educated at home when the school was closed to most pupils during the spring term. The vast majority of vulnerable pupils attended on site.
- Currently, the large majority of pupils are attending on site. A small proportion of pupils are continuing their education remotely due to risks associated with COVID-19.
- A small proportion of staff are absent due to COVID-19.

Main findings

- Leaders have continued to focus on improving the quality of education. A revised curriculum has been implemented. It has three main aims for pupils: employability, good mental health, and personal success. Staff have received extensive and relevant training to teach this curriculum.
- Leaders introduced a recovery curriculum to support pupils back into full-time education on site. Currently, most pupils are following their usual curriculum pathway. Teachers are checking what pupils know and can remember. Staff revisit and repeat aspects of learning with pupils to see if they can apply their knowledge in different contexts. Teachers use this information to plan pupils' next steps.
- The curriculum is carefully sequenced from early years to key stage 5. Curriculum pathways emphasise the development of pupils' career ambitions and their awareness of their future destinations. Staff plan for pupils' needs. They consider how best to meet pupils' individual EHC plan targets through curricular activities. Leaders' work to develop the curriculum pathway for pupils with complex needs is in the early stages.
- Leaders promote a love of reading. They make sure that reading is prioritised in the curriculum. Phonics is taught systematically. Staff expertise in teaching phonics has increased. This expertise has been shared with parents. Leaders check often that the teaching of early reading is consistent across the school.

- Vulnerable pupils receive appropriate support. Staff provide extra help to those who need it.
- Leaders have ensured that those who are not in school can continue to study remotely. They make sure that pupils have the resources and equipment they need to learn at home. Leaders check frequently on these pupils to make sure they are safe. The pastoral team provides support and advice to families when needed.
- Governors have helped leaders to improve the school. They have supported leaders to provide education in the current circumstances. They check often on the systems and processes in place to safeguard pupils. They closely monitor the well-being of staff.
- The trust has provided effective support and challenge to improve leadership and management of the school. It has ensured that necessary work to improve the school has continued throughout the pandemic. It has delivered extensive training for staff and helped leaders to implement the curriculum.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher with responsibility for the primary phase, the assistant headteacher with responsibility for the secondary phase, the pastoral leader, the operations manager, some phase leaders, the employability and careers leader, the chair of governors and the chief executive officer of the Creating Tomorrow multi-academy trust. We also met with a group of staff and some representatives of the school council. In these meetings, we discussed leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils in the current circumstances.

We also reviewed a selection of recorded lessons, examples of curriculum planning and a sample of leaders' plans to further develop areas of the curriculum. We listened to pupils reading to an adult. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 21 free-text responses, and 62 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Creating Tomorrow multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Northamptonshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Stephanie Innes-Taylor
Her Majesty's Inspector