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26 February 2021

Jon Bishop
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Dear Mr Bishop

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Robert Bakewell Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Caroline Poole, seconded inspector, of your school on 3 and 4 February 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 March 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.

Context

- Since the time of the last inspection, nine teachers have left the school, some of whom had been employed on a part-time basis. Six teachers have joined the school. Five new governors have been appointed.
- Across the autumn term 2020, approximately one third of pupils had to be educated remotely. For some of these pupils this was just for a few days.
- Currently, most pupils, including those who are vulnerable, are receiving education remotely. The number of pupils who are coming on site for their lessons has been steadily increasing since the start of this school term. Most pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are also being educated at home.

Main findings

- During the autumn term 2020, leaders provided teachers with training to deliver education remotely. Teachers were well prepared to provide remote learning right from the start of the current national lockdown. The work provided for pupils at home matches that which is provided to pupils in school. Teachers have adapted some of their plans so that all subjects can be taught both in school and at home. This is because pupils do not have the same range of equipment at home as they do in school. In physical education, for example, teachers signpost pupils to online keep fit sessions. They suggest activities that pupils could do at home or during their daily outdoor exercise. Teachers give parents plenty of notice if pupils who are at home need to have equipment available for their lessons.
- Leaders offered places in school to all vulnerable pupils, pupils with SEND and the children of key workers at the start of the current lockdown. Teachers and the home-school support team keep in regular contact with pupils who are learning at home. If they spot that pupils are not engaging in learning, they find out why and offer appropriate support. This includes repeating the offer for the pupil to come into school for their lessons. Leaders have made sure that all pupils who are learning from home, including those who are vulnerable, have access to technology. When leaders spotted that some pupils at home did not have many books to read, they opened the 'lockdown library'. Parents can borrow books from school on a weekly basis.
- The teaching of reading is a high priority at Robert Bakewell. Teachers read to pupils every day. Teachers read live stories to them every Friday. Prior to the pandemic, the class with the highest attendance each week received the reward of having the headteacher read a story to them. This reflects the high profile that leaders give to reading. Phonics lessons continue to take place daily, both in school and using videos for pupils at home. Teachers ensure

that pupils who are at home have books that are just right for them, using the lockdown library.

- Leaders have ensured that pupils with SEND can continue to access education whether they are learning at school or at home. Staff provide alternative suggestions for learning, or bespoke plans, to pupils with SEND who are learning at home. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) continues to work with external agencies to ensure that the needs of pupils with SEND are being met. This includes Autism Outreach and the Educational Psychology Service. The SENCo offers parents reassurance and guidance as they support their children with learning at home.
- Parents who shared their views with inspectors spoke highly of the way that leaders and staff have kept them informed during the lockdown. Typically, parents said that staff have gone 'above and beyond' to support families with remote learning.
- Governors have supported leaders with risk assessments and changes to some school policies. This support has helped to ensure that the school remained open for pupils. Governors have regular discussions with leaders to check the provision for all pupils during this time.
- Leaders have received support from the local authority and from working alongside local schools to develop the school's curriculum. The curriculum is now much more clearly sequenced in almost all subjects. It is clear what pupils should learn from the Reception Year all the way through to Year 6 in almost all subjects.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the chair and vice-chair of governors, the SENCo, school support worker, six subject leaders, three teachers and eight pupils to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown. Inspectors also met with a representative of the local authority and a representative of Loughborough Primary Academy Partnership. This is a group of primary academies in the Loughborough area who work closely together.

Inspectors also listened to four pupils reading to an adult in school. They examined pupils' books from all year groups and a sample of the school's curriculum plans remotely.

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

Yours sincerely

Di Mullan
Her Majesty's Inspector