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Jeni Harrison  
Vice Principal  
Hexthorpe Primary School  
Urban Road  
Doncaster  
South Yorkshire  
DN4 0HH

Dear Mrs Harrison

### **Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Hexthorpe Primary School**

Following my remote inspection with Matthew Knox, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 17 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.

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 January 2020.

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:

- ensure that phonics training is provided to all staff so that they have the skills required to support all pupils in the early stages of reading
- ensure that curriculum leaders have opportunities to monitor the impact of their newly written curriculum plans and assessment systems.

### **Context**

- Since the last inspection, you have appointed a mathematics leader and an assistant principal. Two governors have joined the transition management board (the body responsible for local governance).
- During the spring term, just over half of all pupils were being educated at home. Approximately three quarters of vulnerable pupils and all pupils with education, health and care plans continued to be educated at school.
- At the time of this inspection, two thirds of pupils were in school. The Reception and Year 1 'bubbles' had been closed and these pupils were learning at home.
- During this inspection, you were dealing with some disruption to staffing caused by COVID-19. Thirteen members of staff were self-isolating and a small number of staff were shielding.

### **Main findings**

- You are determined to provide education in the current circumstances. You have identified barriers to learning and provided laptops to help pupils access learning online. You have carried out doorstep visits to deliver work packs to pupils that need them. These visits and welfare checks are continuing for pupils who need to self-isolate. You have translated key messages for parents and carers into languages other than English. This has improved your communication with families.
- Throughout the period when schools were only open to some children due to COVID-19 restrictions, you provided curriculum leaders with time and resources to rewrite their curriculum plans. As a result, you now have plans in place for the knowledge you want pupils to learn. However, COVID-19 has hindered the implementation of these plans and therefore the impact of this work is not yet clear.
- Reading remains a high priority for you. You have swiftly assessed pupils' learning in English and mathematics. You have used this information to quickly identify pupils in need of support to help them catch up. Approximately one third of pupils in school now receive one-to-one reading support, each day. This is in addition to the daily phonics and reading lessons

you have timetabled. However, not all adults have the up-to-date skills and knowledge to support pupils in the early stages of reading. This means that phonics support is not sharply focused.

- You have altered some of your plans to take account of pupils' prior learning. In reading, novel studies have been moved to later in the summer term so that you can focus on pupils' understanding of shorter text extracts. In subjects other than English and mathematics, teacher assessment has been used to decide what pupils should learn next. Teachers plan to continue to use this way of assessing pupils in these subjects. It allows them to quickly check what pupils have remembered.
- Since school reopened to all pupils, your remote learning offer has changed. When bubbles of pupils close, teachers provide 'live' lessons and a full timetable of learning. Where individual pupils are self-isolating, work is offered through paper-based packs. You describe phonics work for these pupils as a period of consolidation. You recognise these pupils are not learning any new sounds in their phonics sessions while at home and you are taking steps to adjust this part of your remote learning offer.
- You have recently carried out a review of the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This has enabled you to understand the barriers which these pupils face with their learning. Leaders have supported teachers to get the right support to these pupils. You are making extra resources available for pupils with SEND in class and this is helping them to access the curriculum. You continue to work with a range of outside agencies, such as physiotherapists and the hearing impairment team, so that pupils receive the help they need.
- Membership of the transition management board has been carefully considered to ensure that it contains the breadth of skills to provide the necessary support and challenge to leaders. Regular reports from leaders and subject leader presentations give the board a clear understanding of the school curriculum. The board know and provide challenge to leaders on the actions they are taking to provide education in the current circumstances.
- You have drawn on the support of external English and mathematics consultants to help subject leaders rewrite the curriculum. You are accessing support from within the trust and you continue to work with a school improvement partner to develop your strategic plans.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, the assistant principal and designated safeguarding leader. We held discussions with curriculum leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. We spoke to pupils and teachers. We held meetings with representatives of those responsible for governance and a

representative of the multi-academy trust to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including eight free-text responses, and 48 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the transition management board, the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Astrea Academy Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Doncaster. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Pearce  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**