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David Littlemore
Headteacher
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Cockney Hill
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Dear Mr Littlemore

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Prospect School

Following my remote inspection with Daniel Lambert, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 16 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 three successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in May 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:

- use assessment information from across the school to establish where pupils have missed or forgotten learning and plan how to address these gaps
- further raise the profile of reading across the school and ensure that the weakest readers make the progress they should.

Context

- Since the last inspection, an assistant headteacher has left the school and has not been replaced. The current headteacher was confirmed in his role in January 2020 and a new chair of governors has been appointed. The school joined the King's Group Academies Trust in October 2020.
- During the period that the school was partially closed at the start of the spring term, almost all pupils were educated remotely. Half of all vulnerable pupils attended on site throughout this period. Almost all those pupils with an education, health and care plan studied from home.
- At the time of this inspection, a small proportion of pupils were self-isolating. Four members of staff were working from home because they were shielding.

Main findings

- Over the past academic year, leaders have made a range of improvements to the education provided. The curriculum has been overhauled in each subject. Leaders are determined to ensure that all pupils receive a challenging and aspirational diet of learning throughout the school. They have reverted to a three-year key stage 3 curriculum to ensure breadth and depth of learning. At key stage 4, more pupils are now encouraged to take up the full range of the English Baccalaureate subjects. Leaders acknowledge that changes are at an early stage, but they are hopeful that these actions will bring about improved pupil learning.
- Despite the COVID-19 challenges that the school has faced this year, leaders nonetheless pushed ahead with improvements in the autumn term. They have introduced a school-wide common approach to lesson delivery. This helps pupils to remember and build on what they have learned before. Leaders have also made sure that systems for remote learning are well established. Pupils who have to learn from home now are able to access remotely the same lessons as their peers.
- Staff worked hard to continue with the planned curriculum during the recent partial closure. Leaders made sure that all pupils at home had access to live teaching for five hours each day. They checked on these lessons to ensure that the new approach to learning carried on. However, leaders have not yet fully analysed what the wealth of information they get from these checks tells

them. They have not used it to know precisely what gaps there are in pupils' learning.

- Assessment information is not used to best effect in the development of pupils' reading. Leaders have introduced a school-wide initiative to help improve pupils' comprehension skills and make sure that all teachers see themselves as teachers of reading. Pupils and teachers are enthusiastic about the reading activities and weaker readers receive extra support. Again, leaders' checks on impact and the tracking of pupils' progress are not as sharp as they should be.
- Leaders in Years 11 and 13 have focused their efforts on the delivery of the full curriculum for these pupils. Here, leaders are making better use of assessment information to pinpoint gaps. They have also concentrated on preparing pupils for the next stage of their learning. Leaders have ensured that an independent careers adviser works with pupils to help them make decisions about their next steps.
- Leaders take very seriously the needs of vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They have ensured that support has been available to these pupils throughout the partial closure this term. Staff have also worked with families to help pupils make a successful return to school.
- The chair of governors has joined forces with an experienced trustee over the past year. They work together with the governing body to place an even stronger focus on the quality of education that the school provides. The governing body has checked closely the provision for pupils with SEND, including during the periods of remote learning.
- The chief executive officer, executive headteacher and link trustee from the trust have supported the school effectively on a range of fronts. They have helped leaders set up systems and routines that have tackled much of the disruptive behaviour that existed before. The curriculum offer is now wider and stronger. They have developed the capacity of leaders to make much-needed improvements in the school.

Evidence

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

We also considered documentation provided by the school. We looked at 51 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 48 free-text comments, and 54 responses to the staff questionnaire.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the King's Group Academies Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Reading. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Yasmin Maskatiya
Her Majesty's Inspector