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Jill Alexander-Steele
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Alexander-Steele

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of The Roebuck School

Following my remote inspection with Amanda Stringer, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 4 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 at its previous section 5 inspections. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in February 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.

Leaders and those responsible for governance should take further action to:

- further refine curriculum plans so that all subject content is carefully sequenced, making it clear what children need to know by the time they leave the early years.

Context

- There have been a considerable number of staffing changes since the previous monitoring inspection in March 2019. Four members of staff have left the school and four new teachers have taken up post. Three governors have left the governing body and one new governor has been appointed.
- During the autumn term 2020, over half of all pupils had to spend some time learning from home.
- At the time of this inspection, just over one third of all pupils were attending school on site. All pupils with an education, health and care plan, and almost all pupils identified as vulnerable, were being educated in school.

Main findings

- Since the last inspection, you, staff and governors have focused on developing the curriculum that is delivered to pupils. You have provided pupils with electronic devices so that they are able to access online learning. Staff have received training in the systems to support home education. These effective actions have ensured you are able to deliver education to all pupils during the third national lockdown.
- Prior to the pandemic, you and other leaders were making many positive changes to the curriculum. Subject leaders have received useful training that is enabling them to map out subject content so that pupils can build on their prior knowledge. However, subject leaders have not extended this work to the early years. The curriculum plans do not identify clearly enough what children in the early years need to know before they move into Year 1.
- Teachers make every effort to deliver the existing curriculum despite the current challenging circumstances. They think carefully about any adaptations to activities that need to be made so that learning can continue at home. For instance, they have suggested the use of alternative resources and equipment that can be found in the home so planned learning can take place. These actions ensure all pupils have equal opportunities to learn.
- You have allocated time each day for all teachers to check the learning of pupils being educated from home. This allows teachers to give timely feedback to further improve pupils' work. Teachers are also able to check pupils' engagement with home learning. You intervene swiftly to offer further

support when pupils struggle with their learning or do not take part in the remote education offer.

- Reading is a key focus for everyone in the school. Younger pupils, including children in the early years, continue to receive tailored phonics sessions from their teachers, whether they are at home or in school. The wide range of texts that pupils read are carefully matched to the sounds that they know. This enables pupils to build their phonic knowledge effectively and become confident, fluent readers. Daily story sessions for each year group are shared online so all pupils can enjoy them.
- Every effort is made to ensure that those pupils identified as vulnerable receive the same education as other pupils. Engagement with parents and carers has strengthened during the pandemic. The family support worker regularly contacts vulnerable pupils and their families to check on their welfare and well-being. Vulnerable pupils in school and at home benefit from reading to staff daily. This is so they do not fall behind. Teachers can access the expertise of relevant school staff, or external agencies, to support the well-being of these pupils further.
- You and other leaders have ensured that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access a broad curriculum whether they are at home or in school. The special educational needs coordinator has trained staff effectively, so that they know how to adapt their plans to best meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Despite the pandemic, you access most external agencies to support pupils with SEND. These measures are resulting in pupils with SEND growing in confidence, perseverance and resilience.
- Governors ensure that all pupils receive an education during the current circumstances. You keep them well informed about school priorities, including remote education. This means that they are well placed to provide appropriate challenge and support. You have given governors access to the remote education platform. This gives them an overview of the remote curriculum that you are providing for pupils who are learning from home. Governors regularly check on your well-being and that of your staff.
- The local authority provides effective support to the school. They have brokered links with specialists and staff in other schools to develop different curriculum areas and leadership capacity. The local authority has also provided curriculum training for the governing body. This training enables governors to hold leaders to account in ensuring curriculum priorities are met.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, pupils, staff, representatives of those responsible for governance and a

representative of the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also reviewed documents relating to the school's curriculum. We listened to pupils read and talked with a group of pupils from key stage 2 about their experiences of school. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 15 free-text responses, and 27 staff questionnaires.

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

Yours sincerely

John Tomlinson
Her Majesty's Inspector