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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
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Charlotte Stillwell
Headteacher
Bassett Green Primary School
Honeysuckle Road
Bassett
Southampton
Hampshire
SO16 3BZ

Dear Mrs Stillwell

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Bassett Green Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Shaun Jarvis, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 23 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 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:

- ensure that pupils are taught to understand and can recall the important vocabulary they need to understand and discuss their learning in all subjects.

Context

- There have been significant staff changes since the last inspection. You joined the school as headteacher in September 2019. The two deputy headteachers, the special educational needs coordinator and 11 teachers are also new to the school over the last 18 months. The governing body has appointed a new chair and vice-chair.
- During the first part of the spring term, around three quarters of pupils were educated at home. Two thirds of vulnerable pupils and a similar proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans were educated on site during the same period.
- All pupils are currently able to attend the school on site.
- Four members of staff are shielding and continue to work from home.

Main findings

- Despite the challenges of the past year, leaders have remained focused on pupils' learning and well-being. Their work on developing the curriculum and its implementation has helped them to guide staff to prioritise teaching the right learning at the right time.
- Leaders have effectively overcome barriers presented by the pandemic, providing online lessons and resources to help all pupils to continue their education. Parents appreciate this and the care of staff during this period. One parent captured the thoughts of many, telling inspectors, 'This school has gone above and beyond for my son during lockdown. It's so nice that my child knows that his headteacher and teachers are proud of him and he is a valued member of the school'.
- Leaders had reviewed and rewritten the curriculum prior to March 2020. This sets out precisely what should be taught and when in each subject. They made sure that all staff were trained to help them to understand what content they were responsible for delivering, how best to do this and how it fits into the whole school curriculum. This meant that staff were well prepared to adapt to teaching remotely when the school partially closed in January 2021.
- Staff are thoroughly checking what pupils know and remember now they are all back in school. They are using this information to tailor the curriculum so that pupils build their knowledge on firm foundations and recap anything that is missing. Some pupils have a weak understanding of important vocabulary.

Staff have identified which specific words they need to teach for pupils to understand, discuss and write about different topics more confidently. This work is still at an early stage.

- Leaders prioritise reading as being key to pupils' success. Staff confirmed this, telling inspectors that it is 'everybody's business'. During the spring term, staff delivered phonics lessons online. Pupils practised their reading using electronic books with paper copies available should they need them. Staff assessed pupils' reading during phone and video calls home. Pupils who have fallen behind now receive daily support in school to help them to catch up. Older pupils continued to study a wide range of texts in their online reading lessons. This has allowed them to return to school as confident readers and to continue to develop their love of reading.
- Leaders have a clear strategy in place should the curriculum need to be delivered remotely to individual pupils who need to self-isolate or for any bubbles that close. These includes plans to provide bespoke home learning packs and electronic devices for pupils who need them.
- Leaders have, rightly, identified support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities as a key priority for the school. Careful monitoring of pupils' needs and communication with families is used to make sensible decisions that are in the best interests of pupils. Pupils follow personalised learning programmes which take account of their individual needs so that they can fully access the curriculum.
- The governing body has benefited from an influx of new, highly skilled members. Governors are clear on the rationale behind leaders' decisions because they have asked appropriate questions and challenge leaders when needed. As a result, they know in which areas the school is improving and have a clear understanding of the key priorities for further development.
- Trust and local authority officers have sensibly aligned their efforts to support the school. They jointly evaluate the quality of education provided and deliver the support needed to address the most important issues. They, rightly, started with senior staff, ensuring they have the skills and knowledge to guide others. These improvements have cascaded through the staff group, helping them to understand and implement leaders' ambitions for pupils.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, the senior leadership team, curriculum leaders and the special educational needs coordinator to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We met with a group of pupils and looked at their work from the autumn and spring term. We met with representatives from the Aspire Community Trust and

Southampton City Council. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 62 free-text responses, and 66 staff questionnaires.

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

Yours sincerely

Daniel Lambert
Her Majesty's Inspector