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Alan Streeter
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Streeter

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Beacon High

Following my remote inspection with Lisa Strong, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 25 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 May 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.

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

- develop curriculum planning in science to support pupils to build their knowledge and understanding of concepts.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, there has been stability in the leadership team and governance. Both deputy headteachers, who were in temporary positions at the previous inspection, have taken up substantive roles at the school.
- Across the autumn term 2020, approximately one half of pupils experienced periods of remote education because of COVID-19. Pupils in Year 8 were affected more than others.
- At the time of this inspection, most pupils were being educated at home. Approximately one quarter of vulnerable pupils were attending on site. In addition, approximately one quarter of those pupils with education, health and care plans (EHC plan) were attending regularly on site.
- Approximately one quarter of the staff were absent in January 2021 due to COVID-19. At the time of this inspection, leaders were still managing the absence of some staff. The arrangements for remote learning were helping leaders to manage this.

Main findings

- You and your team are taking the necessary actions to provide an education in the current circumstances. The needs of all pupils and how they continue to access their learning remain at the core of your thinking. Parents and carers value the ongoing communication from the school and appreciate your work.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have focused their attention on improving the curriculum. Curriculum leaders have developed plans to make sure that key ideas are revisited and built on step by step. This approach is designed to help pupils remember what they have been taught. Leaders recognise that these plans are more developed in some subjects, such as in English and mathematics. There is more work to be done in other subjects, for example in science, to help pupils build up their knowledge effectively. Leaders noted that the pandemic has made teachers refine what pupils need to know and remember.
- From September 2020, leaders provided all pupils with electronic devices in school. Pupils and parents received training on how to use the devices.
- Pupils follow their regular timetable. Routines are familiar because they happened previously in the classroom. Strategies used in school are replicated

remotely. For instance, teachers have provided opportunities for pupils to practise and remember the knowledge they have been taught. This strategy provides continuity for pupils. Leaders value enrichment opportunities for pupils. Some pupils have taken part in remote music clubs during the current lockdown.

- Leaders have prioritised support for pupils in Year 11. Teachers check pupils' work regularly and pupils have completed formal assessments. Teachers have used this information to plan learning for this term. Leaders have made sure that Year 11 pupils receive appropriate advice and guidance to plan their next steps. Leaders have identified a small group of Year 11 pupils whose behaviour might make them vulnerable. Leaders provide additional mentoring and encourage these pupils to attend school on site.
- Leaders have developed a strategy to promote oracy across the school. Teachers deliberately introduce new vocabulary in lessons. Leaders cannot judge the impact of this emerging work yet. Support for reading continues at home for those pupils who struggle with reading fluency. Teachers encourage pupils to read for pleasure. They provide access to electronic books.
- Vulnerable pupils and those with EHC plans are encouraged to attend on-site provision. These pupils access the same online work as pupils learning from home. Support is also provided for these pupils in school. For example, pupils with English as an additional language receive small-group support.
- Leaders constantly reflect on plans to further improve their curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers routinely share ideas and strategies with each other to support these pupils. Pupils with SEND receive extra help, both in and out of school. This helps them to access lessons and learning at their own individual pace. When learning on site, pupils with SEND take part in additional activities, for example gardening and woodwork clubs.
- Governors understand the school's priorities and recognise what needs to be done. They are experienced in their roles and challenge school leaders appropriately. They help to drive forward change and support you and your staff. For example, governors led the work on providing electronic devices for remote education. Staff's and pupils' well-being are at the heart of all their discussions.
- Leaders draw on advice and guidance from the local authority for both funding and decision-making on the curriculum. The school benefits from training provided by the local authority to support pupils with additional needs related to their well-being and behaviour. The local authority adviser spoke positively about improvements to the school's work to fully include all pupils in the life of the school. These improvements have been key to ensuring that pupils continue to access the curriculum. Staff benefit from the collaboration

with the federation's partner schools. They have opportunities to work with other subject specialists.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, the executive headteacher, other senior leaders, 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 scrutinised documentation provided by the school and 'visited' a sample of lessons. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 25 free-text responses, and 41 staff questionnaires.

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

Yours sincerely

Lucy Bruce
Her Majesty's Inspector