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Garry Johnson
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Dear Mr Johnson

Additional monitoring inspection of Gladstone Road Primary School

Following my inspection with Alison Stephenson, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 2 and 3 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 initially carried out remotely but moved to an on-site visit due to significant concerns about safeguarding.

The inspection took place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement. The school was last inspected in December 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.

Safeguarding is not effective.

Under normal circumstances, we would treat this inspection as an inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005, due to the serious concerns identified. However, because routine inspections are suspended, we will prioritise the school for a section 5 inspection when routine inspections resume.

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

- ensure that they have suitable oversight of safeguarding arrangements, in order to assure themselves that the school's policies and procedures are being put into practice
- ensure that there are robust systems in place to check that those pupils who are not in school, particularly the most vulnerable pupils, are safe
- ensure that safeguarding records are accurate and up to date
- check that staff fully understand the safeguarding training they receive and are able to recognise the local risks that pupils may face
- refine systems to check that pupils remember the most important subject knowledge taught as part of the wider curriculum.

Context

- There has been considerable change in staffing since the last inspection. A new headteacher started in January 2020. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) left the school in the spring term 2020. An assistant headteacher has taken on the role of SENCo. In total, 15 teachers have left the school and 10 new teachers have joined. Five governors have left the governing body and five new governors have joined.
- Approximately 40% of pupils accessed education remotely at some point in the autumn term 2020. Two Year 1 class 'bubbles' and one Year 2 class bubble experienced two periods of working from home while self-isolating due to COVID-19.
- At the time of this inspection, approximately 30% of pupils were attending school in person. Almost all pupils with an education health and care (EHC) plan and approximately 60% of vulnerable pupils were in school.

Main findings

- Governors and senior leaders responsible for safeguarding have not maintained suitable oversight of safeguarding arrangements. Consequently, they were unaware of weaknesses in the arrangements to keep pupils safe.
- The safeguarding procedures described by leaders are not consistently applied in practice. For example, there is no consistent approach to

maintaining contact with pupils, particularly those who are most vulnerable, who are not attending school or participating in remote education. This has led to variation in the amount of time some pupils are left before welfare checks are undertaken. As a result, leaders could not be sure that some pupils were safe. Leaders took urgent action during the inspection to check on the safety of some vulnerable pupils.

- Safeguarding records, including records of staff training, are not thoroughly kept. In addition, leaders have not ensured that staff fully understand the implications of training they receive. For example, despite staff having undertaken relevant training, some staff we spoke to did not understand how the Prevent duty relates to pupils in the school.
- Leaders have crafted a remote education offer with a strong focus on encouraging all pupils to participate fully. Leaders have made sure that all pupils have the devices that they need to access 'live' teaching from home. They have consulted with parents about the best ways to engage pupils. Most pupils who are not attending school on site participate in remote education. Many of the parents who responded to the online questionnaire commented how much they valued the remote education that the school offered during the period of partial closure.
- Teachers provide daily live lessons in reading, writing and mathematics to pupils working remotely. These lessons are supplemented with packs of work and resources that are delivered to pupils' homes fortnightly. The resources in these packs help children to practise and remember their learning from the live lessons.
- Subject leaders have evaluated and reviewed the school's curriculum, drawing on support from the local authority. Curriculum plans are now well sequenced and specify the most important knowledge pupils should learn and remember in each subject. Because of the impact of COVID-19 restrictions, leaders have made some adaptations to their new curriculum. For example, in reading, writing and mathematics, plans have been adapted to address some of the gaps in pupils' knowledge following the first partial school closure. The order of some curriculum content has changed in other subjects, such as science and history. Leaders have prioritised the content that they think is the most straight forward to teach remotely. Leaders intend to revisit curriculum plans when pupils fully return to on-site education so that any content that has been missed can be taught.
- In the autumn term 2020, leaders identified that the school's assessment system for subjects other than English and mathematics was too onerous and needed refinement. Leaders were also concerned that it did not focus tightly enough on checking whether pupils had remembered the key content taught through the school's curriculum. Leaders are in the process of developing a

new system to check whether pupils have learned and remembered the most important subject knowledge across the wider curriculum.

- Leaders have worked with a local English hub to develop the school's curriculum for reading and phonics. This is helping pupils to become fluent and confident readers. Teachers provide all pupils with a daily reading or phonics lesson. Pupils have electronic books that are matched to their stage in reading. This helps them to practise the sounds that they have learned. Those pupils learning from home who need help to keep up with the school's curriculum for reading take part in daily catch-up sessions. This ensures that they get the help that they need with their reading.
- Leaders have ensured that appropriate support is in place for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers adapt work for pupils in school and those accessing education remotely to ensure that it is at an appropriate level and accessible to pupils with SEND. The school has accessed the support of a local authority advisor to help improve the provision for these pupils. As a result of this work, teachers are better placed to identify the barriers to learning pupils with SEND may have. Adults are working to ensure that plans to support pupils with SEND are sharply focused on the right areas.
- There is inconsistency in the level of challenge and support offered by governors. In some areas, such as remote education and the curriculum, governors ask challenging questions and hold leaders to account effectively. However, governors have not given sufficient attention to safeguarding. As a result, they have not recognised the shortcomings in the school's safeguarding arrangements.

Evidence

This inspection was initially conducted remotely but moved to an on-site visit due to concerns about safeguarding. We held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders. We spoke to the designated senior leaders for safeguarding, the chair and vice-chair of governors, some pupils and a group of staff. We also spoke to a representative from the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We looked at documents, visited a reading catch-up session and reviewed some of the work that pupils have completed remotely. We scrutinised the school's single central register, risk assessments, safeguarding records and minutes of governing body meetings. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 41 free-text responses, and 55 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 North Yorkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tim Scargill-Knight
Her Majesty's Inspector