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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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James Williams
Executive Headteacher
Parkside Community Primary School
Tennyson Avenue
Canterbury
Kent
CT1 1EP

Dear Mr Williams

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Parkside Community Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Shazia Akram, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 18 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 June 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 all staff have the necessary expertise to teach every pupil to read
- ensure that pupils' reading books help them to practise the sounds that they have learned
- develop the curriculum in the foundation subjects and ensure that knowledge is coherently sequenced from early years to Year 6.

Context

- Since the last section 5, the Parkside Community Primary School has federated with Garlinge Primary School and Nursery. There is now a single governing body in place across the two schools. The executive headteacher has remained in post. A new head of school was appointed in September 2019. This is a small school, with some mixed-age classes. However, the school roll is now expanding and, as a result, leaders have separated their Reception and Year 1 classes and have appointed a new teacher.
- Approximately, three quarters of pupils were educated at home when the school was closed to most pupils at the start of the spring term. Over half of all vulnerable pupils were attending. Four fifths of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) were attending.
- At the time of this inspection, all pupils in one year-group 'bubble' were self-isolating and continuing their education remotely.

Main findings

- Staff have worked extremely hard with pupils and their families to help them access and engage with remote learning. Leaders have ensured that families have continued to receive the wider support that they have needed during this difficult time. The pupils that we spoke with, and the families who provided their views, recognised that leaders and staff were there to help them.
- Throughout the pandemic, leaders have made sure that pupils continue to receive lessons in all subjects. Alongside this, leaders have been continuing their work to develop the school's curriculum, so that pupils learn and remember more over time. Leaders have thoughtfully considered how they can continue to broaden pupils' horizons when it has not been possible to continue with planned educational visits. Pupils that we spoke with were enthusiastic about their learning and proud of their school.
- In English, mathematics and science, leaders have carefully thought through the essential knowledge that pupils need to be taught. Teachers know where pupils need to get to in these subjects and are assessing well to ensure that

any gaps in pupils' knowledge are identified. This meant that at the start of spring term, when school was closed to most pupils, teachers were quickly able to adapt their lessons to deliver them successfully remotely. Consequently, pupils have not fallen as far behind in these subjects as they otherwise might have.

- In other subjects, the curriculum is not yet sequenced in a way that helps pupils to learn more and remember more over time. As a result, it is harder for teachers to assess accurately and address gaps in pupils' knowledge. This includes when some pupils were learning remotely at the start of spring term. Leaders have clear plans in place to develop the school's wider curriculum so that pupils learn well in every subject.
- Leaders are determined that all pupils get the right support so that they become accurate and speedy readers. Leaders have improved the quality of phonics teaching in the school, particularly for children in Reception. Leaders know that there is more to do to ensure that all staff have the necessary expertise to teach every pupil to read. This includes older pupils who are not yet fluent readers. Leaders have also identified that pupils' reading books do not always correspond closely enough with the sounds that children have learned.
- Staff continue to deliver the curriculum rapidly and effectively for any groups of pupils who are not in school. This is because leaders have made clear arrangements and have ensured that all staff are well versed in how to use the school's remote education system. All staff support leaders' expectations that pupils learning remotely will continue to be taught the school's planned curriculum.
- Leaders have made sure that vulnerable pupils, particularly those with SEND, are well supported and have the help they need to do well in their learning. The special educational needs coordinator works closely with teachers to adapt the curriculum in English, mathematics and science to provide pupils with additional speaking and listening opportunities. These support pupils to develop their speech and language and also to rehearse and learn key ideas.
- Those responsible for governance have carried out regular checks to assure themselves of the quality of remote learning provision for pupils. Governors have a strong understanding of the local context, and the school's journey over time. They have worked closely with leaders to ensure that pupils and their families are well supported throughout the pandemic.
- Leaders have benefited from a range of external and internal support, including from the local authority and within their federation. This support has enabled the school to develop their subject leaders and improve the overall quality of education.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you and the head of school, subject leaders, teachers, pupils, those responsible for governance and two representatives of the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also reviewed curriculum plans and governing body minutes, and listened to pupils read. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 14 free-text responses, and 17 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 Kent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Alice Roberts
Her Majesty's Inspector