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Dear Mr Berry

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of LWS Academy

Following my remote inspection with Daniel Lambert, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 17 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 September 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:

- improve all pupils' literacy by:
 - encouraging pupils' independent reading in all areas of the curriculum
 - providing effective additional help for those pupils who need specialist support with reading and writing
 - introducing more opportunities for pupils to develop their spoken language skills
 - consolidating pupils' practice in handwriting and spelling
- reduce rates of persistent absence.

Context

- Since the last section 5 inspection in September 2019, the associate headteacher has become the substantive headteacher. A new assistant headteacher has been appointed and the previous subject leader for English has left the school.
- All pupils at the school have education, health and care plans to address their social, emotional and mental health needs. Throughout the pandemic, the school has remained open for all pupils. At the start of the spring term, just under half of pupils were being educated at home.
- At the time of this inspection, nearly all pupils were attending on site. A very small number of individual pupils were receiving all or some of their education at home as part of a phased return to learning in school.

Main findings

- School leaders and the trust have resolutely continued to provide education for all pupils from the start of the pandemic. They have stuck to their stated principle that 'learning never stops'. Leaders were rightly determined to hold pupils, families and staff together within the school's close community, especially when pupils were educated at home. Staff have energetically supported families with remote education, often providing instant help 'on the doorstep'.
- School leaders are understandably pleased with the way some pupils thrived academically when learning at home. However, leaders are acutely aware that learning at home is no substitute for being in school, where pupils' different needs can be met more effectively. Leaders have wisely built upon their strong relationships with families now that all pupils are expected to attend on site. Staff have helped families to establish purposeful routines at home,

including ensuring that pupils get enough sleep, exercise and social times. Leaders are ambitious about improving attendance and, despite a reduction in persistent absence, they know that further improvement is needed.

- Staff continued to monitor pupils' learning during the national lockdowns, with regular assessments taking place as normal. Now that pupils are back in the classroom with their peers, teaching staff are sensibly checking their confidence and understanding before moving on to new topics.
- Following the section 5 inspection in September 2019, leaders reviewed their curriculum, particularly what pupils were learning at key stage 3. Staff carefully planned the progression of their subjects from year to year. They now have a better idea of the knowledge and skills that pupils should be aiming for. Leaders have also made a start on finding out more about what pupils may have learned or missed when they were in primary school in order to build a better curriculum for Years 7 and 8.
- Improving reading is rightly the school's number one priority. Staff have received helpful training in how to improve pupils' literacy, including promoting reading and practising handwriting. Staff and pupils practise reading in all subjects, not just English. A well-planned programme of extra help supports those pupils who are struggling. Pupils enjoy regular reading sessions with their teachers and teaching assistants. Overall, staff's commitment to the promotion of reading is helping to change pupils' minds. Previously, some pupils feared and avoided reading aloud, but now they are relieved to be getting the help they need. Pupils have told staff, 'this is what we have been waiting for.'
- Not all pupils are confident with spoken English when answering questions and talking about their ideas. School leaders agree that more could be done to build pupils' fluency and vocabulary when speaking in order to support their reading, writing and management of emotions.
- Year 11 pupils have continued preparing for their end of key stage examinations and assessments with heartening determination. The school benefits from its partnerships with the trust's mainstream secondary schools, which provide guidance for subject teachers and their assessments. School leaders work effectively with other agencies to ensure that all pupils, including those who may be most vulnerable, are on the right path to further education and employment.
- Members of the phase committee understand the school's literacy priorities and have carefully reviewed the impact of improvement plans so far. They have monitored the school's approach to remote and on-site education closely. Members make sure that they gather the views of parents, pupils and staff and use these when discussing future planning. Trustees and the

recently appointed director of schooling are knowledgeable and realistic about improvements in the school.

- Advisers from Hampshire local authority have provided additional training in literacy for staff. Teachers and teaching assistants appreciate the impact this has made on their own skills and on pupils' knowledge and confidence.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, senior leaders and staff to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown. We also held meetings with the chief executive officer of the Gosport and Fareham Multi-Academy Trust (GFM Education), the director of schooling for the trust and members of the school's phase committee.

We also reviewed documentation related to governance, met a group of pupils and looked at a sample of their work. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including four free-text responses, and 18 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the phase committee, the chief executive officer of the Gosport and Fareham Multi-Academy Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hampshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Janet Pearce
Her Majesty's Inspector