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3 March 2021

Robert Sloan  
Executive principal  
Lodge Park Academy  
Shetland Way  
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Northamptonshire  
NN17 2JH

Dear Mr Sloan

### **Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Lodge Park Academy**

Following my remote inspection Chris Davies, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 3 and 4 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 special measures.

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 was judged to require special measures at its previous section 5 inspection. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in January 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.**

## Context

- A new chief executive officer joined the trust in July 2020. In September 2020, a new assistant principal was appointed, and three staff joined the school's extended leadership team. A trust-wide vice-principal has been based at the school since January 2021.
- In the autumn term 2020, only a small proportion of pupils experienced a period of remote education because of COVID-19. Most of these pupils were in Year 9.
- Currently, the vast majority of pupils are being educated at home. About one quarter of pupils who are vulnerable and a minority of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are attending school on site.

## Main findings

- You and other senior leaders are determined to improve the school. This approach has continued despite the impact of COVID-19 restrictions. Together you have created a culture of aspiration for pupils and staff. Pupils are proud of their school. They know that staff care about them and want them to do well.
- You have prioritised developing the curriculum since the time of the previous inspection and during the pandemic. You have changed key stage 3 back to a three-year curriculum, so that pupils have time to secure their subject knowledge. You have ensured that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get the right support.
- Training has helped curriculum leaders to develop the skills and confidence to lead their subject areas. They have improved their curriculum plans to make sure that pupils can build on what they know already. The new plans include opportunities for pupils to remember information and practise using their new knowledge. Some subjects are not as far ahead as others in developing their curriculums.
- The plans for remote and on-site education are well thought-through and reviewed regularly. You communicate any changes to these arrangements to parents and carers. Leaders are mindful of the extra burdens placed on staff and take care to reduce these. Staff, families and pupils value your 'family-first' approach during the current circumstances.
- Staff have taken different approaches to providing remote education. Some use video clips so that pupils can observe practical demonstrations, while others teach live lessons to the whole year group. These approaches are working well to ensure that all pupils learn the full curriculum. Teachers share ideas to improve online teaching. For example, they have developed more effective ways of using technology to give pupils feedback remotely.

- You are confident that pupils entered for examinations will finish their courses. Some Year 13 curriculum plans have been modified. Year 11 pupils told us that they are focused on their learning, rather than worrying about their final grades. Leaders provide pupils in Years 11 and 13 with careers guidance to support their next steps.
- Arrangements for education are the same for pupils in school and those at home. Vulnerable pupils and other pupils attending school on site receive extra help from learning support assistants. They take part in some practical activities, such as physical education, and design and technology.
- You expect pupils to read each day as part of their daily timetable. They can choose books from the online digital library. Younger pupils attending on site get extra help if they are struggling to read, including with phonics. Older pupils do not all get the support they need to improve their reading during the current circumstances.
- Leaders are ambitious for pupils with SEND. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) provides teachers with effective strategies to meet these pupils' needs. Teachers use this information to make sure that these pupils can complete their learning remotely. Leaders have adjusted the curriculum for some of the pupils who are learning at home.
- Trustees, governors and trust leaders work together closely. They use their considerable knowledge to provide you and other senior leaders with the right support and challenge, particularly in relation to the curriculum. The trust has supported senior and curriculum leaders to review the curriculum. Trust leaders have helped you to respond to the challenges of providing remote education, such as by offering pupils online enrichment activities and reading resources. They, like you, remain determined to ensure that the school continues to improve.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We held meetings with the executive principal and principal, and other members of the senior leadership team. We spoke with school and trust curriculum leaders. We had discussions with the SENCo and members of staff responsible for pastoral support and safeguarding. We spoke to a group of staff, a group of pupils and heard two pupils read. We held meetings with those responsible for governance and trust representatives, including the chief executive officer, to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We reviewed examples of remote lessons and looked at information about the curriculum and other documentation provided by school leaders. We considered the responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the responses to the survey

for staff. We also reviewed staff and parent responses to school surveys about remote education.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the David Ross Education Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Northamptonshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Rachel Tordoff  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**