

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



4 March 2021

Kevin Green
Principal
Manchester Health Academy
Moor Road
Wythenshawe
Greater Manchester
M23 9BP

Dear Mr Green

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Manchester Health Academy

Following my remote inspection with David Selby, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 10 and 11 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 have serious weaknesses.

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 have serious weaknesses at its previous section 5 inspection. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in March 2020.

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 staff expertise further so that they can identify and address the gaps in pupils' reading knowledge.

Context

- The number of pupils on the school's roll has increased considerably over the last 12 months.
- Since the last inspection, 17 teaching staff and 15 members of support staff have been appointed. These appointments include three assistant principals, lead practitioners in English, history, mathematics and modern foreign languages, and a new subject leader in food technology and in modern foreign languages.
- Six teachers have left the school, including one assistant principal. One trustee has resigned.
- During the autumn term 2020, all pupils had to learn from home for short periods of time due to self-isolation. Pupils in Years 8 and 10 had more periods of self-isolation compared to other year groups.
- At the time of this inspection, one tenth of pupils were being educated in school. Almost three fifths of vulnerable pupils and half of the pupils with an education, health and care plan were attending on site.

Main findings

- Since the previous inspection, you and those responsible for governance have taken effective steps to strengthen senior and middle leadership across the school. As a result, leadership capacity at all levels is steadily growing. You and the leadership team have successfully focused on the actions necessary to provide pupils with an education in the current circumstances.
- At the time of the previous inspection, you and the school's leadership team were in the early stages of planning a new curriculum. Since this time, you have successfully completed these plans and put them into action. You are now beginning to check that subject curriculums build important knowledge in the correct order so that pupils know more over time.
- Teachers are adapting the curriculum appropriately in response to the disruption caused by COVID-19 restrictions. They are working collaboratively across curriculum areas so that subject content is not duplicated. For example, geography teachers have worked effectively with the science department to include 'rocks and the rock cycle' in their curriculum plans.

- Over recent months, teachers have produced a resource for pupils which identifies the most important knowledge and vocabulary that pupils must remember. Teachers use this resource to support the delivery of the curriculum in school and at home. The pupils and teachers that we spoke to said that this was working successfully.
- You expect Year 11 pupils to attend an extra lesson at the end of the school day. This is helping teachers to address the missing knowledge that Year 11 pupils have due to the weak curriculum they experienced in the past. The extra lessons are also helping them to overcome the negative impact that the pandemic has had on their learning. Most pupils attend these sessions regularly. Year 11 pupils are becoming more confident with what they must know and remember to be successful in the future.
- Reading is a high priority for you and the leadership team. You have successfully established a common approach to reading. Teachers and pupils read together and discuss important subject vocabulary. However, staff have not had enough training to enable them to identify and address the weaknesses in some pupils' reading knowledge.
- School leaders have appropriate procedures in place to check the attendance and engagement of those vulnerable pupils who are working remotely. For example, staff respond quickly by making telephone calls and visiting pupils' homes when concerns arise. If pupils still fail to engage in their learning, you provide additional challenge and support, including from outside agencies.
- You and the leadership team have strengthened the education offer for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). You have appointed extra leaders to support with this aspect of the school's work. You have also committed more time and resources to improve outcomes for pupils with SEND. You have carefully considered leaders' roles and responsibilities. These changes are contributing positively to pupils' learning whether they are studying at home or at school.
- Leaders have clear, well-organised systems in place to identify and support pupils with SEND. These systems enable the positive relationships that staff have built with external agencies to continue uninterrupted during the pandemic. During this third national lockdown, leaders have ensured that pupils with SEND access their usual curriculum offer.
- The chair of the board of trustees has increased her support for the school by meeting with you more regularly. This has helped her to understand the challenges faced by staff and leaders during this challenging time. Trustees and governors demand stronger assurance about the quality of the school's work than they did in the past. They hold you and other leaders to account for their actions. The trust has also provided more funding to buy digital

devices so that more pupils can access their education remotely. This is helping to reduce inequality among pupils.

- The local authority continues to provide support to leaders. It has recently engaged a new adviser to offer bespoke advice about the quality of education at the school.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We held meetings with you and other leaders, including both vice-principals, trustees and members of the local governing body. We also met with teachers, teaching assistants, groups of pupils, and a representative of the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We reviewed a range of documentation, including curriculum materials, minutes of governors' meetings and examples of remote education. We also looked at the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 86 free-text responses, and 64 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff.

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

Yours sincerely

Alyson Middlemass
Her Majesty's Inspector