

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
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5 March 2021

Gemma Simon  
Headteacher  
Tamworth Enterprise College and AET Academy  
Birds Bush Road  
Belgrave  
Tamworth  
Staffordshire  
B77 2NE

Dear Mrs Simon

**Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Tamworth Enterprise College and AET Academy**

Following my remote inspection with Catherine Crooks, 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 require improvement.

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 has received three successive judgements of requires improvement. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in June 2018.

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

- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant staff changes. In September 2019 you were appointed as headteacher. In the following 12 months, a new leadership team was appointed. An extended leadership team was created in September 2020. This included the appointment of lead teachers in English and mathematics. The current special educational needs coordinator was appointed in September 2019. Eight newly qualified teachers joined the staff in September 2020.
- Across the autumn term 2020, approximately 45% of pupils had to be educated remotely for a period of time. Year 11 pupils were most affected, with some pupils having to self-isolate three times.
- At the time of this inspection, approximately 90% of pupils were learning at home. Fifty per cent of the pupils identified as being vulnerable were being educated in school. Similarly, 50% of the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) were in school.

## Main findings

- You and your staff are successfully providing pupils with an education in the current circumstances. Leaders, with the support of the multi-academy trust, have made sure that all pupils can access the internet and have an appropriate device to use at home. Teachers have embraced the technology. They are determined to use it effectively to help pupils learn. Systems are running smoothly. Therefore, pupils have the hardware and skills they need to learn at home.
- All pupils learn through a combination of live lessons and independent tasks. In school, pupils receive additional support from teachers and learning support assistants. Staff encourage pupils to take part in online lessons. They are constantly looking for innovative ways to do this. As a result, pupils join in readily and teachers use pupils' contributions well.
- Pupils know they can get help from staff when needed. They value this support. Teachers work together well to plan and teach remotely. Staff are rightly proud of their efforts. One teacher observed, 'We have come together as a school.' Teachers' expectations of pupils are high. Leaders reflected on the challenge of making sure all pupils always produce their best work. Staff acknowledge that this remains a challenge.
- Curriculum leaders have reviewed subject plans and made sensible changes to the order in which some content is taught. Leaders plan creatively. For instance, in science, staff film experiments for pupils to view online. Leaders are alert to remote learning which has been less successful. In these instances, they plan to revisit this learning. Leaders continue to improve

subject plans. These map what pupils should know and remember. This helps pupils link new learning to their existing knowledge.

- You and your leadership team are holding staff to account. Leaders complete regular checks on lessons. Teachers value, and act on, any feedback. Staff morale is high. Leaders encourage staff to view the teaching of others. This collegiate approach benefits pupils because teachers learn from each other in considering how learning should meet pupils' needs.
- Leaders keep a careful eye on pupils' attendance in live lessons. Pastoral leaders contact vulnerable pupils and their families daily. They encourage pupils to attend school if they are finding it difficult to learn at home. This means that staff can provide extra support if necessary. Leaders recognised that some Year 11 pupils were becoming disheartened. To address this, staff supported pupils to think about their 'next steps' in education or training and employment. This is helping to keep them motivated. As a result, the high level of pupil engagement in remote learning continues to increase.
- Reading is a whole-school priority. Subject leaders incorporate elements of reading, extended writing and subject vocabulary into their plans. Leaders have improved the quality and range of literature available. Pupils have increasing access to this literature through e-books and virtual book clubs. Much of this is new. Leaders have yet to check the impact on pupils' reading.
- Leaders track the participation in remote learning of pupils with SEND. Staff quickly intervene when pupils are not online. Consequently, the number of pupils with SEND who engage in the live lessons and complete the independent tasks is increasing, but leaders acknowledge that there is more to do. In live lessons, teachers create opportunities for pupils with SEND to ask for help. Learning support assistants are in regular contact with pupils to provide support and join some lessons remotely. This means pupils with SEND make progress.
- Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the education that pupils currently receive. They are ambitious for all pupils. They challenge what leaders tell them. As a result, they hold leaders to account. They are not afraid to make difficult decisions.
- The multi-academy trust (MAT) has high expectations of leaders. They provide comprehensive support and challenge. Close links between the governing body and trustees mean that the MAT is responsive in its support. For example, providing subject expertise in science. This has helped improve learning in that subject.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, senior and subject leaders, teachers, pupils, representatives of the governing body and trustees, and

the MAT secondary executive director to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also reviewed curriculum plans, examples of materials used in live lessons and samples of pupils' work. In addition, inspectors viewed recordings of live lessons. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 15 free-text responses, and 42 staff questionnaires.

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

Yours sincerely

Ian Tustian  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**