

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



10 March 2021

Janina Taylor
Principal
Grace Academy Coventry
Wigston Road
Coventry
West Midlands
CV2 2RH

Dear Ms Taylor

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Grace Academy Coventry

Following my remote inspection with Mark Sims, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 25 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 was judged requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspection. Prior to this the school was judged to have serious weaknesses. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in December 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.

Leaders and those responsible for governance should take further action to:

- strengthen curriculum plans further to sharpen the focus on what pupils need to know and remember
- support pupils with reading at home.

Context

- Since the school's last inspection in December 2019, a new vice principal and three assistant principals have been appointed to the leadership team. In March 2020 the pastoral team was restructured. As a result, the head of year for each year group has changed. The current special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) was appointed in September 2020.
- During the autumn term, approximately 50% of pupils had to be educated remotely for a period of time. Year 7 pupils were most affected, with more Year 7 pupils having to self-isolate than in other year groups.
- At the time of this inspection, approximately 5% of pupils were attending school and 50% of pupils identified as being vulnerable were being educated in school. 15% of the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) were in school.

Main findings

- You and your staff have risen to the challenge of providing pupils with an education at this time. Your efforts are proving successful. Leaders expect pupils to participate with remote learning and check carefully pupils' engagement. Staff are quick to intervene if they do not. As a result, levels of pupil engagement are high.
- Leaders respond quickly to any problems pupils have with their learning. For example, leaders made sure that all pupils have suitable devices and internet access at home. Parents and pupils can get immediate technical advice and support. Leaders provide bespoke provision for pupils who have little knowledge of English, ranging from individual support to tailored work packs.
- At the time of the previous inspection, leaders had started to improve the curriculum. Since then, progress has accelerated. In some subjects, curriculum plans make it crystal clear what pupils need to know and remember. However, you acknowledge that this is not the case in all subjects. Curriculum leaders continue to be supported to make the improvements needed. Currently, whether at home or school, pupils study their usual subjects. Leaders have reviewed plans and made changes where appropriate. These changes have helped staff to plan purposeful remote education.

- Teachers have a 'can-do' attitude to remote education. They modify lessons to suit online teaching, sharing resources and ideas. Leaders visit live lessons and view recordings. They talk to staff about what is working well and what could be improved. Teachers check pupils learning, for example, by using quizzes and recording oral feedback. This means that pupils continue to learn.
- Staff have high expectations of behaviour in remote education, which they make clear to pupils and parents. Staff know what to do if pupils behave poorly in live lessons. Leaders act swiftly to address problems. As a result, there have been few instances of pupils' behaviour disrupting remote education.
- Pastoral leaders provide support to pupils if they find remote education difficult. Staff are attentive to pupils' well-being and have worked hard to build a positive school culture. Relationships between school and home have been strengthened. This is bringing benefits for all and especially vulnerable pupils. Staff are in regular contact with pupils at home and keep a watchful eye on those who may need support. This close contact means pupils receive extra help when needed.
- Leaders continue to prioritise pupils' literacy in subject plans. Staff have carried on with additional support for those pupils who struggle with reading. Currently, these pupils miss some modern foreign languages lessons to access this support. Leaders do not know how much reading pupils are doing at home.
- Staff support pupils well in Year 11 and students in Year 13. Leaders have been particularly thoughtful in adapting the curriculum for these year groups. Staff expect Year 11 pupils to attend an extra lesson for support in core subjects. Pupils get appropriate information about their 'next steps'. For instance, by attending online careers fairs. Pastoral leaders are tenacious in ensuring Year 11 pupils engage in remote learning. As a result, all do.
- Pupils with SEND benefit from additional support. Where appropriate, staff provide personalised paper packs of work. In addition, pupils in school and at home get extra individual help from staff. Staff contact families regularly to check on pupils' progress and welfare. All of this is helping pupils with SEND keep pace with their learning.
- Governors know the school well. They meet with leaders on a regular basis to question what they are being told. Consequently, they understand where the school has improved and what leaders still need to do. They are well aware of staff's efforts to provide an education at this time. The multi-academy trust (MAT) provides effective leadership and curriculum development support. This support holds leaders to account and is considerate of their well-being. This practical support helps leaders to continue to seek solutions to the challenges they face.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, senior, pastoral and subject leaders, teachers, SENCo, pupils, representatives of the governing body and trustees and representatives of the multi-academy trust 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 49 free-text responses, and 53 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Tove Learning multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Coventry. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Ian Tustian
Her Majesty's Inspector