

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



15 March 2021

Tasleem Koser  
Acting Headteacher  
Woolenwick Junior School  
Bridge Road West  
Stevenage  
Hertfordshire  
SG1 2NU

Dear Mrs Koser

### **Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Woolenwick Junior School**

Following my remote inspection with Damian Loneragan, 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 two successive judgements of requires improvement. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in February 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.**

## Context

- The previous headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) left the school in April 2020. You were then appointed as acting headteacher and a new SENCo was appointed from within the school staff. A new deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2020. Two governors have left the school and others have joined the governing body.
- Across the autumn term 2020, around a tenth of pupils had to be educated remotely. The proportion was similar in different year groups and no classes were more greatly affected than others.
- At the time of this inspection, around a quarter of pupils were being educated on the school site. Around half of these are vulnerable and the remainder were children of critical workers. A third of the pupils that the school has identified as vulnerable, and most pupils with an education, health and care plan, were attending onsite provision.

## Main findings

- Leaders and governors have ensured that education continues to be provided for pupils in the current circumstances. The previous inspection took place only a month before the first national lockdown started in March 2020. Despite this, it is clear that you have focused very well on the areas for improvement that the inspection identified. For example, you have focused on improving the school's curriculum and raising staff's expectations of what pupils can learn. However, there is still work to do. For example, you are continuing to work on developing and improving some aspects of the school's curriculum, such as design technology.
- Leaders and staff have adapted the school's existing curriculum well. The remote curriculum matches the school's usual curriculum as far as possible, although you have had to make some minor adaptations. For example, staff have moved aspects of music and design technology to later in the school year so that elements that can more easily be learned at home are taught now.
- You have put a suitable online system in place and ensured that pupils are able to access it. Where pupils are unable to access online provision, or where this does not meet their individual needs, you have arranged for pupils to receive printed copies of the work which teachers set instead. Parents told us how much they value and appreciate the work the school is doing to provide education remotely.
- Leaders are providing well for vulnerable pupils. You are clear about your definition of what it means to be 'vulnerable' and have identified all the pupils who meet that definition. Although only about a third of these pupils are attending the school site, all vulnerable pupils have been offered a place on

site. Leaders and staff ensure that they have regular contact with vulnerable pupils who are not attending the school site. They take appropriate actions to support them and their families.

- Pupils who attend the school site are also taught the school's usual curriculum, with the same minor changes as for those receiving remote education. They are taught directly by school staff rather than using the online system. You have ensured that vulnerable pupils benefit from the additional support available from staff in school. Pupils who spoke with us told us how fortunate they consider themselves to be coming into school each day.
- Leaders monitor provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. You have ensured that pupils with SEND continue to receive the support they need. Pupils who are coming into school are supported by the same staff, in the same way, as they would be in normal times. Pupils with SEND who are learning at home are also supported well. This means that pupils with SEND are continuing to learn the curriculum in the current circumstances.
- You are continuing to prioritise reading across the school. For the weakest readers, both learning at school and at home, staff use a range of successful strategies to help them with their reading. Pupils told us how much they like reading and about the books and authors they enjoy. You have found ways to ensure that pupils continue to have different texts available to them, including regular reading sessions with their teachers and access to online libraries.
- Governors took swift action to address the weaknesses identified by the previous inspection. They have supported and challenged you to improve the curriculum and to tackle the other areas that required improvement. Governors are determined that pupils continue to receive education and they monitor provision carefully to ensure that this is the case.
- The local authority continues to provide the school with appropriate support and challenge. The allocated improvement partner is supporting you to manage the demands that the pandemic brings with it. They are also supporting you to continue your school improvement journey. For example, they are currently working with leaders on developing the school's design technology curriculum.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, pupils, staff, governors, and a representative of the local authority proprietor to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also observed pupils reading to their teachers, visited a live lesson and looked at a range of evidence of how the curriculum is being delivered currently. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including 54 free-text responses, and 24 staff questionnaires.

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

Yours sincerely

Wendy Varney  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**