

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
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22 March 2021

Tina Whitehouse  
Headteacher  
Summerfield Education Centre  
Auckland Drive  
Smith's Wood  
Birmingham  
B36 0DD

Dear Mrs Whitehouse

### **Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Summerfield Education Centre**

Following my remote inspection with Martin Pye, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 23 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.

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 June 2019.

Having considered all the evidence and taking into account the impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus) 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:

- ensure that governors scrutinise the content and sequencing of the curriculum more closely
- continue to encourage more pupils to attend school in person.

### **Context**

- Since the last inspection, one assistant headteacher has left the school. Two members of staff have been added to the senior leadership team. One has responsibility for behaviour and inclusion and the other oversees teaching and learning. Three members of the management committee, who are responsible for governance, have left and have been replaced.
- The school relocated to its current site in September 2020.
- The school has reduced considerably its use of alternative provision. A very small number of pupils now study at one of three alternative providers.
- Approximately 55% of pupils have had to be educated remotely at some time during the autumn term 2020.
- At the time of inspection, a little less than 50% of pupils were being educated in school. Almost all pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

### **Main findings**

- You are successfully providing education for pupils at this time. Pupils who attend school have their usual lessons. You use different models of remote education for pupils who are learning at home, depending on their individual needs and circumstances. Consequently, most pupils engage well with their learning. Most pupils take part in small group, live, online lessons. Others have one-to-one online lessons. You have provided laptops for some families so that pupils can access these sessions. You provide printed packs of work for some pupils because their needs or circumstances make accessing online work difficult.
- At the time of the previous inspection, pupils were not studying enough subjects. For example, they did not study science. The curriculum also had insufficient emphasis placed on academic subjects. You have addressed these issues successfully. All pupils now study a broader range of subjects, including science, technology, humanities and the arts.
- Pupils continue to study all their usual subjects, both in school and at home. Staff adapt content carefully for pupils who are not in school. For example, in English and mathematics, teachers have increased the time spent on revising

and revisiting key knowledge to try to ensure that it has been learned. In practical subjects such as food technology, art and music, teachers have changed the order in which topics are taught. Consequently, pupils at home are not disadvantaged by the fact they do not have practical equipment.

- You consider all pupils at the school to be vulnerable in some way, and almost all pupils have SEND. Your staff provide effective support for pupils both in school and at home. This support includes daily contact with one of your academic and restorative mentors (ARMs) and immediate contact when pupils are not present in online lessons. ARMs visit some pupils and their families each week to deliver and pick up printed work packs.
- You offer on-site education to all pupils. Approximately 50% attend. Since the previous inspection, improving attendance has been one of your key priorities, and you saw some success in the autumn term of 2020. Although most pupils engage well with remote education, you rightly want more pupils to attend school in person. You also recognise that the end of lockdown is likely to present further challenges in persuading some pupils to return to school.
- Your curriculum places a strong focus on preparing pupils for their next steps when they leave the school. The curriculum now enables all pupils to achieve appropriate qualifications. You give personal, social, health and economic education a high profile, currently focusing on supporting pupils' mental health and online safety. You have successfully maintained a strong focus on careers education throughout the pandemic. For example, pupils in Year 11 told us about the online work placements they have been able to attend.
- Members of the management committee possess expertise in several relevant areas, including behaviour, attendance, curriculum development and careers education. They use this expertise well to provide good support and challenge to leaders. They are well informed and provide effective scrutiny of many areas of school life. However, to date, governors' scrutiny of the curriculum has been limited to looking at its overall structure, including the qualifications being offered. Governors have not yet turned their attention to the content and organisation of learning within individual subjects.
- External support has contributed well to the school's improvement, and therefore to the education being provided at this time. The local authority has provided regular challenge and support with areas of weakness identified at the last inspection. A local high school is supporting curriculum development in the school.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, pupils, staff, members of the management committee and a representative of the

local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We spoke with representatives of alternative providers. We also scrutinised minutes of management committee meetings and resources provided for pupils' remote education. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including two free-text responses, and 17 staff questionnaires.

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

Yours sincerely

Alun Williams  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**