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Andrew Deen
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Dear Mr Deen

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Landau Forte Academy, Amington

Following my remote inspection with Heather Simpson, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on Thursday 4 March 2020, 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 May 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:

- accurately identify the gaps in pupils' knowledge in order to help inform curriculum planning.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, there have been several new appointments of key staff. You were appointed principal in July 2019 and a new chair of governors took up post in December 2019. The school also appointed a new vice principal and two assistant principals. A new senior leader responsible for safeguarding was appointed in September 2020.
- Approximately 80% of pupils had to be educated remotely at some point during the autumn term 2020. Year 9 were more affected than others due to repeated periods of self-isolation.
- At the time of this inspection, 90% of pupils were being educated at home. Approximately 50% of both pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and vulnerable pupils were attending on site.
- A small number of staff are isolating with family members. They have continued to work from home during this current national lockdown.

Main findings

- You and your staff have put in place clear procedures for delivering remote education. Online learning is offered through both live and recorded lessons. Teachers adopt similar routines at the start of each lesson and provide clear instructions when introducing new learning to pupils. This provides pupils with a consistent approach to teaching and supports their learning well. The multi-academy trust has supported you in acquiring 135 laptops so that all pupils have access to remote learning. As a result, attendance to online lessons is high and feedback from both pupils and parents is overwhelmingly positive.
- You have high expectations for remote learning. Leaders carry out checks to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the school's provision. You told inspectors that feedback to pupils needed to be sharper. In response to this, your leaders have trained staff on how to use additional features of your online platform such as polls and quizzes.
- You recognise that, prior to the start of the pandemic, the curriculum was not fit for purpose. Leaders acted swiftly and decisively in the spring term 2020 to put in place new curriculum plans for each subject. Staff have continued to deliver this curriculum remotely this term.
- For some subjects in key stage 3, teachers have fewer direct teaching hours when delivering the curriculum remotely. Leaders have, therefore, adapted

curriculum plans effectively so that teachers focus on the key concepts and vocabulary that pupils need to know and remember. For example, in Year 7 English, teachers have selected key scenes from 'Romeo and Juliet' to explore Shakespeare's writing. You recognise the importance of accurately identifying gaps in pupils' knowledge. You have plans to introduce a 'recovery curriculum' in order to help pupils catch up on lost learning when they return to school.

- Vulnerable pupils and the children of key workers who are in school follow a similar timetable to those who are working remotely. For vulnerable pupils working at home, leaders have clear systems in place to check they are engaging with their lessons. For vulnerable pupils who do not engage with learning at home, staff act quickly to ensure these pupils are brought back into school. Leaders have identified a small number of vulnerable pupils who have displayed higher levels of mental health issues during this current lockdown. Staff have swiftly sought external support for these pupils.
- Leaders continue to support Year 11 pupils well. Pupils receive daily tutor sessions and have completed a well-being survey recently to alert staff to any potential issues. You have also continued with Year 11 parents' evening, albeit remotely, in order to update parents about the progress of their child.
- Leaders have maintained the support for pupils with SEND. Staff have been successful in bringing half of these pupils into school to receive face-to-face support. Staff are in regular contact with the remaining pupils working at home and continue to provide access to external services. Leaders have ensured that the work set for pupils with SEND is tailored to their individual needs. Some receive additional paper-based work packs where needed.
- Governors are supportive of leaders in their approach to remote learning. They understand that staff have worked hard to move the school's curriculum to an online platform. You regularly update governors on how the school ensures that all pupils are accessing learning remotely. However, governors do not challenge leaders sufficiently or have a detailed enough understanding of leaders' actions.
- The trust provides effective support and challenge to school leaders. Since the previous inspection, the trust has conducted two reviews of the school's performance. The trust has accurately identified the strengths in the school's curriculum provision and the improvement work that needs to continue. You are clear about the next steps in the school's journey and the trust is fully supportive of the actions you and your leadership team are taking.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, the multi-academy trust chief executive officer, pupils, staff and representatives of those

responsible for governance to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also looked at examples of online lessons and curriculum plans on the school's website. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 26 free-text responses, and 83 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of Landau Forte Charitable multi-academy 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

Mark Howes
Her Majesty's Inspector