

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



19 March 2021

Mrs Jan Collins
Acting Head of School
Fountaindale School
Nottingham Road
Mansfield
Nottinghamshire
NG18 5BA

Dear Mrs Collins

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Fountaindale School

Following my inspection with Christine Watkins, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 2 March 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 have serious weaknesses.

Following changes to government guidance and the imposition of COVID-19 (coronavirus) lockdown restrictions, some aspects of this monitoring inspection were carried out remotely. The lead inspector visited the school site due to significant concerns about safeguarding and leadership and management raised at the last inspection. The range of evidence available to inspectors was narrower than would normally be the case. 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 have serious weaknesses at its previous section 5 inspection. 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.

Safeguarding is effective.

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

- provide support for teachers so that they have the confidence to extend learning for pupils, particularly those who are exceeding expectations.

Context

- Since the last inspection, 25 members of staff have left the school. A new assistant headteacher and 18 new members of staff have been appointed. A total of 11 governors have left the governing body. The large majority of these vacancies have been filled.
- A small number of pupils were educated remotely during the autumn term 2020.
- Currently, about one third of pupils are being educated at home. These pupils are particularly vulnerable to the risks posed by COVID-19. The vast majority have multiple and profound medical and learning needs.
- A small proportion of staff are absent due to COVID-19.

Main findings

- Leaders have reviewed and implemented a revised curriculum. Staff are appropriately trained. Subject leaders support staff to ensure pupils make progress. They check that learning meets pupils' individual needs.
- Senior leaders check often on the quality of education. These checks show that teachers do not always have the confidence to move pupils on to the next steps in their learning when they are ready to do so.
- The curriculum to teach reading is carefully sequenced. Learning is broken down into small components of knowledge. Teachers match learning in reading to pupils' different cognitive needs. This supports pupils to learn more and remember more.

- There is a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics. Staff share training in phonics with parents. Parents use this knowledge to support their children using phonics at home.
- Pupils taught remotely study the same curriculum as that taught in school. Teachers provide learning to meet the specific needs of individual pupils. Paper packs of work and resources are also provided for pupils where appropriate. Staff run extra lessons for pupils who need help to stay on track with their learning.
- Leaders have ensured that the vast majority of pupils are attending school on site. They check the quality of provision for pupils working in school and remotely. They make sure that pupils are safe and well cared for. Risks associated with COVID-19 have been carefully considered for those pupils who are extremely vulnerable. Staff communicate with parents frequently to check on the well-being of families.
- Governance of the school has improved since the last inspection. New governors have received pertinent training for their roles. They check often that actions to improve the school are effective and that pupils are safe.
- The local authority has provided effective support and challenge to improve the leadership and management of the school. An interim executive headteacher appointed by the local authority is supporting the school to improve the quality of education and ensure that safeguarding procedures are rigorous.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff receive appropriate training to understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Procedures to safeguard pupils are efficient and timely. Leaders provide staff with the information they need to look after pupils and keep them safe. Leaders responsible for safeguarding work actively with external agencies and parents. Records for safeguarding are concise and thorough. Staff told me that they are clear that 'safeguarding is everyone's responsibility'.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely and on site due to concerns about safeguarding and leadership and management at the last inspection. We spoke to you, the interim executive headteacher, the assistant headteacher, a senior leader, subject leaders, the chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We looked at some of the school's curriculum plans and viewed samples of learning that is provided remotely. We listened to pupils reading to an adult.

The lead inspector toured the school and spoke with staff and pupils. Records and documents relating to safeguarding were scrutinised with leaders on site. The school's single register of checks carried out on the suitability of staff to work with children was examined. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 18 free-text responses, and 25 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 Nottinghamshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Stephanie Innes-Taylor
Her Majesty's Inspector