

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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



15 April 2021

Catherine Gadd  
Headteacher  
Beacon Academy  
Woodthorpe Road  
Loughborough  
Leicestershire  
LE11 2NF

Dear Mrs Gadd

### **Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Beacon Academy**

Following my remote inspection with Shaheen Hussain, seconded inspector of schools, of your school on 25 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 require improvement.

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 three successive judgements of requires improvement. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in October 2017.

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:

- continue their work to develop curriculum plans for foundation subjects with subject leaders and ensure that plans show clearly what pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), need to know and remember over time.

## **Context**

- Since the previous inspection, a new deputy headteacher and two newly qualified teachers have been appointed. A new teacher has been appointed to work with pupils with SEND. An acting assistant headteacher and a teacher have left the school.
- When the school was closed to most pupils at the start of the spring term, a large majority of pupils were educated at home. Just over a half of pupils with education, health and care plans were educated on site. A slightly smaller proportion of vulnerable pupils were attending on site.
- Currently, the large majority of pupils are attending on site. A small proportion of pupils are being educated remotely. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 4 'bubbles' are isolating due to risks associated with COVID-19.
- A small proportion of staff are absent due to COVID-19.

## **Main findings**

- School leaders are continuing their work to improve the school. There is a strong focus on improving the curriculum. Leaders are reviewing the curriculum offer to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils, particularly in light of the pandemic.
- Core subjects in the curriculum, such as English, mathematics and personal, social and health education, have been revised. The content of what is taught in these subjects has been considered and is carefully sequenced. Work to ensure other subjects in the school's curriculum are planned so that it is clear what pupils need to learn and when, is ongoing. The planning of some subjects, such as music, is in the early stages of development.
- Currently, pupils are following their usual curriculum. Teachers have checked what pupils know and can remember. Leaders are using this information to plan pupils' next steps and inform curriculum planning. Teachers plan to revisit and revise some learning content before pupils move on to learning new knowledge.
- Leaders promote reading for pleasure. Reading is prioritised in the curriculum. Staff expertise in teaching phonics has improved. Pupils use their phonics

knowledge well to help them read unfamiliar words. The books that pupils read are matched to the sounds that they know.

- Pupils with SEND, including those who access the specialist provision, continue to receive a suitable education. Pupils receive extra adult support and activities when necessary, including personalised work.
- Vulnerable pupils receive appropriate support. Staff give extra help and resources to those who need it. Leaders ensure pupils who are learning remotely have the equipment and resources they need.
- Leaders have ensured that those pupils who are not in school can learn remotely. They make sure that the education pupils receive closely mirrors that delivered in school. Teachers provide pupils with the materials they need to work at home. Leaders check frequently on these pupils to make sure they are safe and well. Teachers offer support and advice to parents when needed.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school and the community it serves. They give support and challenge to leaders to develop the curriculum. They often check the decisions and actions leaders take to improve the school. They have supported leaders to provide education in the current circumstances.
- The multi-academy trust has ensured that work to improve the school has continued throughout the pandemic. It is providing effective support and challenge to senior leaders to improve the quality of education. It is supporting subject leaders and has delivered extensive training for staff to improve the curriculum.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, the deputy headteacher, two assistant headteachers, the associate headteacher, the special needs coordinator, some curriculum leaders, two representatives from the trust, the chair of the governing body and a group of teachers, to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils in the current circumstances.

We listened to pupils reading to an adult. We also reviewed examples of curriculum planning. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 11 free-text responses, and 46 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the Academies Enterprise Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Leicestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Stephanie Innes-Taylor  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**