

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



15 April 2021

Jonathan Lumb
Principal
Haughton Academy
Salters Lane South
Darlington
County Durham
DL21 2AN

Dear Mr Lumb

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Haughton Academy

Following my remote inspection with Eleanor Belfield, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 24 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 at its previous section 5 inspections. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in June 2018.

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:

- implement the planned reading strategy, so that pupils gain the language comprehension they need as a foundation for future learning
- ensure that the curriculum changes you have made mean that pupils know more and remember more of what they have learned.

Context

- Three new governors have joined the governing body since the last inspection. In December 2020, the trust appointed a new chair of governors.
- Approximately 90% of pupils were educated at home in the spring term, before the school reopened to all pupils. During that time, 25% of vulnerable pupils and 25% of pupils with an education, health and care plan were educated on site.
- At the time of this inspection, approximately 95% of pupils were attending on site.

Main findings

- Leaders and those responsible for governance have ensured that education continued throughout the period when schools were only open to some pupils due to COVID-19 restrictions. All pupils studied the usual curriculum, whether learning at home or in school. You made some curriculum changes to adapt to the periods of remote learning. For example, in art, you moved a Year 8 topic requiring the use of clay for sculpture until later in the year. This is because it was not possible to do this at home. However, in some other subjects, you have kept to your original plans. For example, in geography, teachers continued teaching urbanisation because this knowledge was necessary for future learning. You have a clear curriculum plan for each subject.
- During the period when schools were only open to some pupils due to COVID-19 restrictions, you planned carefully how to deliver education remotely. Pupils followed their normal daily timetable. Remote learning was a combination of live, online lessons and time given to pupils to work independently. Pupils' engagement was high because you ensured that lessons could be accessed using mobile phones as well as laptops and tablets. If pupils need to learn from home in future, the work will be online at the same time as their normal lesson. These measures have made remote learning effective.
- In 2019, you reviewed and changed the school's curriculum. You have allocated more time to key stage 3. This curriculum development is now in place. Subject leaders have considered the content and sequence of the

knowledge that pupils need. You acknowledge that the next step is to evaluate how effective this curriculum is in ensuring that pupils know more and remember more.

- Teachers have thought carefully about how to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding as they return to the classroom. Teachers begin each lesson with a short quiz to see what pupils can remember from previous topics. As a result of this, you are making changes to your planned curriculum. For example, in French and Spanish, pupils need more practice at speaking and listening. This approach is effective because it is helping you to identify what pupils need to learn next.
- Pupils in Year 11 told us about their plans for their next steps in education, employment or training. They said that the careers advice and guidance provided by the school has continued throughout the pandemic. They found this advice useful. As a result, pupils are clear about their next step in education. You have communicated clearly with Year 11 pupils about how they will be assessed for their GCSE courses. Year 11 pupils told us that they feel reassured.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have the support they need. Teachers have received recent training to adapt lesson activities to help pupils with SEND understand their work. Pupils with SEND continue to access specialist external support. This support is effective because you have targeted it to those who need it most.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the community and the school. They have remained in regular contact with school leaders. Governors have carried out their strategic responsibilities during the pandemic. For example, they have continued to monitor the curriculum changes. Governors regularly assess the impact of actions outlined in the school's improvement plans. The work of governors is effective.
- The school is drawing on support from external partners and local networks. This support includes working with other schools and a national leader of education. This work is focused on strategic developments such as curriculum planning and subject leadership. This is bringing about change and it is effective.

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 looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 41 free-text responses, and 52 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Education Village Academy Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Darlington. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Carl Sugden
Seconded Inspector