

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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



29 March 2021

Matthew Smith  
Director of Education  
Wesc Foundation School  
Topsham Road  
Countess Wear  
Exeter  
Devon  
EX2 6HA

Dear Mr Smith

### **Additional monitoring inspection of Wesc Foundation school**

Following my on-site inspection with Matthew Barnes, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 2 to 3 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 special measures.

Following changes to government guidance and the imposition of COVID-19 (coronavirus) lockdown restrictions, most of Ofsted's monitoring inspections are being carried out remotely. This inspection, however, took place on site due to significant concerns about safeguarding and leadership and management.

The inspection took place because the school was judged to require special measures. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in December 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.**

**Safeguarding is effective.**

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

- improve pupils' early reading skills
- improve the skills and expertise of teachers to help them check how effectively pupils are learning the planned curriculum.

## **Context**

- Since the section 5 inspection that judged the school to require special measures, there have been no departures or appointments of staff. A new trustee and a new advisory member have been appointed to the education and care committee.
- Across the autumn term 2020, no pupils had to be educated remotely.
- At the time of this inspection, all pupils were being educated at school. All pupils who attend this school have an education, health and care plan.
- At the time of this inspection, there were no staff absent due to COVID-19 restrictions.

## **Main findings**

- At the previous inspection in December 2019, safeguarding arrangements were ineffective and placed pupils at significant risk. You, your leaders and trustees took rapid action to tackle the shortfalls in safeguarding. Staff receive high-quality safeguarding training. As a result, staff are confident in how they recognise, report and record when they have concerns about the safety of a pupil. You have established a robust system to safeguard pupils from all potential risk and to keep them safe.
- All pupils meet the government's definition of vulnerable pupils. Staff have provided pupils with clear guidance on how to keep themselves safe, for example when working on electronic devices.
- At the time of the previous inspection, systemic weaknesses were identified in the quality of education. You and your team acted swiftly and with determination to overhaul the curriculum. A clear framework is now in place for pupils to build their knowledge and skills term by term and year on year.
- You continue to adapt the school's curriculum in light of your evaluation, for example, you have improved how you develop pupils' skills in tactile communication and braille.
- Staff are working more effectively with other professionals, such as psychologists, occupational health and speech and language therapists. This approach is providing pupils with better support to help them achieve their

goals. However, you are aware that further staff development is pivotal to ensuring that they have the necessary skills and expertise across the subjects they teach. This training will enable them to check how effectively pupils are learning the planned curriculum.

- You and your leaders have correctly identified that reading is a priority. Plans are in place to develop pupils' early reading skills and phonics. Nevertheless, you recognise that your new approach to teaching reading is in the early stages of development and more work is needed.
- You and your leaders have ensured that effective on site or remote learning is available to all pupils. You have refined remote education in light of your evaluation from the first lockdown. For example, you have ensured that pupils have access to all of the equipment they need. You have also provided more parent-friendly information to enable parents to support their child effectively.
- You and your leaders pay close attention to pupils who are working towards qualifications in Year 11. Destination profiles are in place for every pupil. These profiles show pupils' aspirations clearly and what knowledge they need to achieve their goals and to thrive.
- Trustees hold you and your leaders to account more robustly for the quality of education provided. While they are understanding of the adaptations caused by the pandemic, they continue to work to assure themselves that an effective education is being provided for pupils. Trustees continue to focus on the school's development of safeguarding procedures and the appropriateness of curriculum plans for pupils.
- You, and your governors, welcome the external support from other leaders of special schools within the South West. Your work together is having a positive impact on developing the effectiveness of the quality of education in the school.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted on site due to concerns about safeguarding and leadership and management. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, the chief executive officer, and three trustees responsible for governance to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown and safeguarding.

We also spoke to pupils and staff about remote learning and their experiences at the school. We reviewed documents provided by the school, including those relating to safeguarding and the pre-employment checks made on staff. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including three free-text responses, and 13 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer or equivalent of the Wesc trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Devon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jen Southall  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**