

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



31 March 2021

Tim Chambers
Headteacher
Bilton School
Lawford Lane
Rugby
Warwickshire
CV22 7JT

Dear Mr Chambers

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Bilton School

Following my remote inspection with Nicola Harwood, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 16 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.

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 was judged to have serious weaknesses at its previous section 5 inspection. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in October 2019.

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.

Context

- Since the last inspection, an assistant headteacher with responsibility for safeguarding was appointed. A new chair of the local governing body took up post in January 2021.
- Between the start of January and 5 March 2021, around 10% of pupils were educated on site. Approximately 70% of vulnerable pupils and 70% of pupils with education, health and care plans attended school.
- At the time of this inspection, just over 95% of pupils were attending on site. A very small number of pupils, who are shielding, were receiving their education remotely.

Main findings

- You and your team have high expectations for all pupils. During this term, you worked diligently so that pupils could access the curriculum remotely or in school. As part of that work, the school provided equipment to pupils who needed it. Before pupils came back to school on 8 March 2021, you and other leaders carefully planned how best to support pupils on their return. As part of this plan, you prioritised re-establishing clear routines. You have communicated this plan well to pupils and staff. Pupils told us that they have been able to settle back into school quickly.
- Despite the many challenges of the last year, you have taken steps to improve the quality of education. Curriculum leaders have developed their subject plans. The plans follow a logical order and set out the knowledge pupils need to know and remember. In addition, leaders continue to develop subject expertise through regular training.
- Since January 2021, teachers have been making regular checks on what pupils have learned. Leaders use the information from these checks to identify what pupils remember. Curriculum leaders have a clear picture of where gaps in pupils' learning have formed. This means leaders are able to make swift and well-informed changes to their subject plans. In mathematics, for instance, leaders identified that pupils in Year 8 had struggled to add and subtract negative numbers. As a result, the mathematics curriculum has been appropriately adapted to reteach this essential knowledge.
- Leaders have a comprehensive plan for supporting all pupils to become fluent and confident readers. They make suitable checks to identify pupils' starting points in reading. Consequently, leaders know which pupils need extra help. Leaders have ensured that the staff who provide help to these pupils are well trained.
- Pupils in Year 11 and Year 13 continue to receive helpful advice and guidance about their next steps. They are complimentary about their teachers and the

support they receive. Leaders are aware that even though pupils in the sixth form studied all of their usual subjects when learning remotely, they could not access some wider aspects of the sixth-form curriculum, such as the debating society. You have wasted no time in reinstating your full curriculum offer. Next week, for instance, pupils in Year 13 will be attending a session on managing their money well.

- You and other leaders take effective action to provide support for vulnerable pupils. For example, as part of your plan to support pupils back to school, staff worked closely with vulnerable pupils' families. Leaders also introduced an online system for pupils to share their worries with staff. Pupils are encouraged to share any concerns they have about returning to school. Pupils value this and said that teachers respond to their concerns quickly. This has helped to reduce some pupils' anxieties about returning to school.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) continues to improve. Leaders ensure, through 'pupil passports', that staff know how to support pupils with SEND. Leaders prioritise training for staff on how best to support pupils with SEND. Consequently, these pupils are well supported to access the curriculum.
- Members of the local governing body have a clear understanding of their role. Since the last inspection, they have rightly had a sharp focus on ensuring that pupils are safe. They receive helpful information about the school and use this information well to hold leaders to account. Governors regularly gather the views of parents, pupils, and staff. This ensures that they have an accurate picture of the school.
- The trust provides effective support in the current circumstances. At the start of the latest national restrictions, they took swift action to ensure that a clear strategy for providing education remotely was in place. In addition, trust leaders offer support on practical matters such as providing electronic devices. This support allows school leaders to focus on improving the quality of education.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, curriculum leaders, pupils, staff, and representatives of those responsible for governance to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

A range of documents were scrutinised including examples of curriculum plans in English, mathematics, history and art. We also looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 13 free-text responses, and 61 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Stowe Valley Multi Academy Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Warwickshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Stevens
Her Majesty's Inspector