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Davina Aspinall  
Headteacher  
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Dear Ms Aspinall

### **Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Maghull High School**

Following my remote inspection with Linda Emmett, 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 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 require improvement. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in April 2018.

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:

- refine the current methods for checking what pupils have learned in all subjects, so that teachers are better able to plan the next steps in pupils' learning.

## **Context**

- Since the previous monitoring inspection, three members of staff have left the school. 16 staff, including three new assistant headteachers, have been appointed. Some staff have been promoted to new posts. Internal appointments include a director of English, a director of science, a director of sixth form, a literacy coordinator and a digital coordinator.
- The school joined the Southport Learning Trust in November 2020.
- Approximately nine out of ten pupils were educated at home in the spring term before the school re-opened to all pupils. Just over a third of vulnerable pupils and approximately three out of ten pupils with an education, health and care plan were educated on site during that time.
- At the time of this inspection, nearly all pupils were attending on site. A very small proportion of pupils from different year groups were self-isolating and working from home.

## **Main findings**

- You, the staff and governors are providing all pupils with an appropriate education at this time. Pupils have returned to school with great enthusiasm for learning. You have made sure that all pupils study the usual curriculum whether they are in school or at home. Many parents and carers spoke highly of the way that you have kept them informed during the pandemic. You continue to provide the necessary electronic equipment to those pupils who are currently self-isolating. This means that pupils continue with their studies despite not being in school.
- Before the pandemic, subject leaders reviewed the curriculum. Pupils in key stage 3 now have more time to study geography, history and languages than they did previously. Since March 2020, most subject leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn and the order in which they will acquire new knowledge. Some subject leaders are further ahead than others in developing their curriculums. Leaders are continuing to review and improve curriculum plans in English and some other subjects. This is to ensure that pupils can revisit learning so that they know and remember more from year to year.
- You plan to prioritise the practical content of subjects, such as food technology, that have been more difficult to teach to pupils when they were

at home. In most subjects, teachers use a range of strategies to identify what pupils have learned over recent months. However, in other subjects, the approach that teachers take to check on pupils' learning does not present a clear enough view of what pupils can and cannot do. This inhibits teachers' ability to plan the next steps in pupils' learning.

- Teaching all pupils to become confident and fluent readers is a key priority. Teachers quickly identify weaker readers. You have trained staff on strategies to support pupils who find reading more difficult. Pupils continue to profit from additional phonics sessions whether they are at school or at home. You have invested in an online library to foster pupils' love of reading for pleasure.
- You provide extra support to pupils in Year 11 and 13 to make sure that they can succeed in their end of year assessments. Pupils in Year 11 and Year 13 are on track to finish their courses by the usual timelines. They continued to receive helpful careers advice and work experience opportunities when schools were partially closed.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Leaders make appropriate adaptations to the curriculum so that pupils with SEND can succeed in their learning. Pupils with complex learning needs benefit from additional support from teaching assistants.
- Leaders kept a close eye on the well-being of vulnerable pupils when they were working from home. Now that most have returned, leaders are ensuring that these pupils continue to benefit from additional help to support their learning and attendance.
- The chief executive officer (CEO) and governors have a good understanding of the current situation in the school. This is because they have regular discussions with you and other leaders about the curriculum and remote education. Governors are supportive of leaders. They hold you and others with responsibility within the school to account for your actions. Governors are making a positive contribution to the school's work during the current challenging circumstances.
- The school has benefited from support and challenge from the trust. This has had a positive impact in helping most subject leaders to improve curriculum planning. You have drawn effectively on the support of the trust and an external consultant to improve the provision for pupils with SEND.
- Subject leaders have had the opportunity to visit local schools and received training from the local authority to develop their subject knowledge and leadership roles. Consequently, they are more confident in leading their areas of responsibility.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We held meetings with you, other senior leaders, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, staff, pupils, CEO, chair, and vice chair of the board of trustees, two members of the local governing body and a representative of the local authority. This was to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also carried out a review of the curriculum that pupils are receiving. This included the arrangements for delivering the curriculum remotely. We examined a range of documentation, including minutes of governing body meetings. We also analysed 96 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 88 free-text responses from parents. We also considered 62 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the CEO of Southport Learning Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Sefton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Ahmed Marikar  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**