

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



19 April 2021

Andrew Parry
Headteacher
Hylands School
Chelmsford Road
Writtle
Chelmsford
Essex
CM1 3ET

Dear Mr Parry

Additional, monitoring inspection of Hylands School

Following my inspection with Andrew Hemmings, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 18 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 took place on site because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector had significant concerns about the effectiveness of safeguarding at the school.

The inspection took place because the school was judged to require improvement at its previous section 5 inspection. 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 (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.

Safeguarding is effective.

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

- make sure parents are well informed about their children's learning and the support their children need, particularly for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Context

- Since the previous inspection, three members of the leadership team have left. One parent governor has joined the governing body.
- During the spring term, approximately nine out of 10 pupils were educated at home before the school reopened to all pupils. Over half of vulnerable pupils were educated on site. Approximately two thirds of pupils with an education, health and care plan attended school.
- At the time of this inspection, the majority of pupils were attending school. There were a small group of pupils who were not attending school due to COVID-19-related reasons.
- There are a small number of pupils who attend alternative provision at this time.

Main findings

- Pupils are happy to be back at school. They are complimentary about the online learning they received during remote education. Parents agree. Many described the remote education offer as 'first-rate' and 'excellent'. You have been resolute in providing a broad education at this time and have been flexible in your approach. You and your leaders listened to parents and acted on their feedback about what worked well for pupils learning remotely.
- Prior to the pandemic, leaders reviewed the curriculum to ensure subject content was suitably ordered so that pupils' knowledge builds over time. Some subject content has been adjusted to be delivered online. During the third national lockdown, teachers developed new ways of checking pupils' learning so that pupils can 'hit the ground running' now they are back at school.
- Pupils who are not attending school continue to learn online with pre-recorded inputs and scheduled discussions with teachers. They learn the same content as pupils who are attending school.
- You are determined that pupils read widely and often. Pupils have many opportunities to read during the school day. Teachers quickly identify those pupils who are at the early stages of reading and need extra support. Due to extensive training, teachers in a range of subjects are confident in their

knowledge of teaching reading. You have ensured that pupils can access an online library to help maintain their reading habits and fluency in reading.

- Pupils in Year 11 and students in Year 13 are well supported. Leaders have been clear about how grades will be awarded at a time when public examinations are not taking place as normal. The recent 'Rev it up' week gave pupils the message that the future is not cancelled.
- Leaders check regularly on the welfare and well-being of pupils. This helps to inform and plan appropriate support. During the early part of the spring term, teachers regularly contacted vulnerable pupils who remained at home. Staff gave extra support where needed. Older pupils attending school continue to benefit from well-being support such as mindfulness sessions and meditation.
- Following the most recent inspection, improving the quality of education for pupils with SEND was a high priority. Leaders are working on this. During the pandemic, staff adjusted the planned support on pupils' plans so that pupils with SEND could continue to access the curriculum remotely. Teachers have checked the learning of pupils with SEND during this time. However, leaders of SEND are not aware how well pupils with SEND have learned in all subjects. A significant minority of parents continue to have concerns about the support their children receive.
- Most parents who responded to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, would recommend the school and are positive about the education their children receive. However, a fifth of parents who responded do not feel well informed about their children's learning.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff know how to keep pupils safe. All staff receive regular training and are up to date with their knowledge of the risks young people face. They know how and when to report concerns so that safeguarding leaders can respond quickly to any issues that arise. Leaders work well with external agencies, such as social services, to make sure pupils receive the support they need. Leaders keep detailed and thorough records of concerns and actions taken.
- Pupils say they feel safe and trust staff to deal with any problems, including bullying. Pupils take part in a range of anti-bullying programmes, including being anti-bullying ambassadors and a regular lesson based on personal and social development. Pupils know how to be safe online and they understand the importance of reporting any concerns they have.
- Governors take their safeguarding role very seriously. They ensure that leaders respond readily to any actions from the trust's safeguarding audits. Governors continue to hold school leaders to account for the education that they provide during this time. They hear first-hand from staff and pupils about

changes to the curriculum and pupils' experiences of learning. Governors have checked carefully on the welfare and well-being of staff during the pandemic.

- You and your staff value the support from the trust. This includes support for leadership, curriculum planning and improving the subject and teaching knowledge of staff. A local authority school improvement adviser also provides support to the school.

Evidence

This inspection was carried out on site due to concerns about safeguarding. We held meetings with you, senior leaders, department leaders, year leaders, pastoral managers, leaders of SEND, welfare officers, teachers, support staff and three groups of pupils. We also spoke to representatives from the trust and the governing body. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown, and their arrangements for safeguarding.

We also considered the school's record of pre-employment checks, and other documents linked to the school's safeguarding and child protection arrangements. We sampled minutes of governing body meetings and other documentation. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 90 free-text responses, and 51 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 Kemnal Academies Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Essex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Liz Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector