

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



22 April 2021

Emma McCann
Executive Headteacher
Radford Primary Academy
Lawrence Saunders Road
Radford
Coventry
West Midlands
CV6 1HD

Dear Mrs McCann

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Radford Primary Academy

Following my remote inspection with Alison Bradley, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 30 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 two successive judgements of requires improvement. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in January 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.

Leaders and those responsible for governance should take further action to review the implementation of the new curriculum by:

- monitoring and evaluating the impact it is having on pupils' learning
- embedding the assessment of foundation subjects and using what teachers learn to inform future lessons
- ensuring that the learning in early years is planned carefully so it prepares children for the Year 1 curriculum.

Context

- You were previously headteacher of an outstanding primary school in the trust. In January 2020, you took up the newly created role of executive headteacher to lead that school and Radford together. The two local governing bodies merged at the same time. In September 2020, the associate headteacher and assistant headteacher joined the school, having been promoted from roles in the partner school.
- Two thirds of pupils were educated at home when the school was partly closed earlier in the spring term. Approximately two fifths of pupils identified as vulnerable were educated on site during this period. Half of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including most pupils with an education, health and care plan, attended school.
- At the time of this inspection, almost all pupils were in school apart from individuals who were self-isolating while waiting for a test result.

Main findings

- Leaders have been diligent in ensuring all pupils continued with their learning during the recent national lockdown, whether at home or school. They thought carefully how to best teach those at home, building on the experience of the first lockdown and responding to parent feedback. This led to high levels of engagement in remote learning during the recent partial closure.
- You and your leadership team have worked hard over the last year to completely overhaul how subjects are taught. Working with subject leaders, your team has introduced plans in science and the wider curriculum. These map the development of pupils' knowledge and skills from Year 1 to Year 6 but do not yet clearly build on what is taught in early years. Your plans to monitor how well the new curriculum is being taught have been hampered by the pandemic.
- Leaders are using appropriate checks to see whether pupils remember what they have been taught this year. In reading and mathematics, teachers use

tests that are closely linked to what they wanted pupils to learn. In other subjects, teachers are reviewing pupils' work and using quizzes as part of the new curriculum, but this is at an early stage of development. Pupils did less writing than usual during the recent partial school closure, so teachers are giving them more opportunities than usual to reinforce writing skills in different subjects.

- Leaders have introduced a well-sequenced reading curriculum, although the pandemic means they have not been able to get into classrooms to fully review how well it is being taught. Staff have relevant early reading training, which helps them support pupils well. Younger readers are taught phonics systematically and have books which enable them to practise the sounds they have been learning. Struggling pupils are given extra support to help them keep up. A strong focus on phonics during the most recent lockdown has ensured that pupils' early reading skills are mostly where teachers expect them to be.
- You have ensured any pupils at home have daily work that is linked to what their class is learning in school. Reduced staffing capacity means the current remote offer is less than it was during the period of partial closure. You are aware of this and intend that any self-isolating pupils will be supported to catch up on their return.
- The newly formed pastoral team prioritise vulnerable pupils well and they ensure those in need get the necessary support. Staff worked effectively to encourage the most vulnerable pupils into school. They maintained close contact with those at home to check on their well-being and ensured they had essential learning resources, such as laptops.
- Leaders have strengthened provision for pupils with SEND since the last inspection. They have ensured staff are trained to meet pupils' needs in the classroom rather than being taught separately. During the partial closure, teachers adapted learning for those at home so that tailored support continued. Pupils who attended school during this period thrived on extra adult support in small groups.
- During the recent partial closure, the multi-academy trust focused strongly on checking that all pupils were getting an education, and that the most vulnerable were effectively supported. The trust is strengthening many aspects of the school's work by forging strong links with the partner school and more widely across the trust. Pupils are benefiting from the trust's vision of 'one school across two sites'. Members of the local governing body have held leaders to account for different aspects of the school's curriculum development. They recognise the next step is to fully monitor how well the new plans help pupils to learn.

- Leaders have made effective use of support from external reading consultants. They have used a phonics expert to help ensure the teaching of early reading is consistent for all pupils. Another reading specialist has supported leaders to establish the new reading curriculum for older pupils.

Evidence

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

We also examined subject plans, listened to pupils read and examined minutes of meetings and reports from the local governing body and multi-academy trust. We looked at responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including nine free-text responses, and 24 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local governing body, chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Sidney Stringer multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Coventry. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Laurie Anderson
Her Majesty's Inspector