

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



23 April 2021

Susan Webb
Principal
South Wigston High School
St Thomas Road
Wigston
Leicester
LE18 4TA

Dear Mrs Webb

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of South Wigston High School

Following my remote inspection with Charlie Fordham, Her Majesty's Inspector, of your school on 23 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 May 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 ensure that:

- staff consistently apply the school's agreed procedures to manage pupils' behaviour
- the information gained from teachers' assessments is used effectively to identify what pupils have remembered, and what else they need to learn in the future.

Context

- In January 2021, the school joined the Learning Without Limits Academy Trust. A senior leader has been seconded from the trust to improve the curriculum and raise achievement. Two new middle leaders and three newly qualified teachers have joined the school. A new vice-chair of the governing body has been appointed.
- At the start of the spring term, when the school was not open to all pupils, 89% of pupils were educated at home. Eleven percent of pupils attended on site. Approximately half of these pupils were known to be vulnerable or were pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This included eight of the school's 17 pupils who have an education, health and care plan.
- At the time of the inspection, 90% of pupils were attending on site. A group of 24 pupils in Year 9 had been asked to isolate at home and were learning remotely.

Main findings

- Leaders have taken suitable actions to develop the curriculum. Improvements made after the previous inspection slowed at the start of the pandemic. Time has been used effectively to gauge what learning pupils have missed and what needed to be taught again. An adapted curriculum was implemented at the start of the 2020 autumn term.
- Your monitoring shows that learning provided during lockdown worked well. Pupils in Years 7 and 11 told us that they have continued to learn and feel they are making progress. You acknowledge that during this period, practical learning in science, dance, music, art and physical education (PE) was limited.
- The vast majority of pupils returned to school this term. Pupils are currently taught in separate 'zones' to minimise movement around school. Few changes have been made to the curriculum. Pupils continue to study their usual subjects. More time has been allocated to teaching core subjects to help pupils in Year 11 to catch up. This has marginalised core PE, which is not currently taught.

- When pupils returned to school this term, you prioritised welcoming them back into their new surroundings and keeping everyone safe. Staff have begun to make assessments in lessons to build on the information gained during lockdown about how well pupils are progressing. Further assessments are planned for next term. You feel these will provide a clear overview of what pupils have remembered, and what learning may need re-visiting. Staff are expected to adapt the curriculum to ensure that pupils gain the knowledge they need.
- Staff use a range of strategies to encourage pupils to read. They use different texts, social media and poetry to foster pupils' interest and encourage them to read widely. Pupils with SEND receive support to develop their reading. Support for less able readers, other than those with SEND, is underdeveloped. There is no clear approach to teaching pupils to read by using phonics. Older pupils are taught the vocabulary but are not helped to interpret meaning and understand opinions in newspaper articles.
- Currently, a small proportion of Year 9 pupils are taught remotely. Consequently, staff are preparing online resources as well as teaching in classrooms. They continue to provide a blend of live lessons in core subjects and a range of tasks for pupils to complete in their own time. You have checked that all pupils have suitable devices to learn at home.
- Staff responsible for pupils with SEND ensured that pupils and their families were supported during the previous lockdown. Staff remained in weekly contact with pupils to make sure they had the resources needed to engage in remote learning. Regular checks have continued as pupils have returned to school. Staff have re-assessed pupils' additional needs, including those pupils who joined in Year 7. Each year group has a learning support assistant allocated to support their learning.
- Survey responses revealed that some staff have concerns about pupils' behaviour. You are aware of inconsistencies in how staff apply the school's agreed procedures to manage pupils' behaviour and acknowledge the need to eradicate these inconsistencies. The trust feels it is now in a good position to support you with this action.
- Joining the trust this year has bolstered governance. The governing body and trust board share a common vision for the school and are working together to oversee improvements. Regular meetings enable those responsible for governance to hold you and other leaders to account. They have asked challenging questions about the decisions made during the COVID-19 period.
- New partnerships have enabled you to gain from the good practice in other schools within the academy trust, and local teaching schools. The trust is providing challenge and support through joint monitoring arrangements and greater scrutiny of the school's improvement plans.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you and senior and middle leaders, the chief executive officer of the academy trust, a group of staff, two groups of pupils and four members of the governing body to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during the current circumstances.

We also met with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss the school's safeguarding arrangements. We looked at 14 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 60 responses to the staff questionnaire.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer of the Learning Without Limits Academy Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Leicestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson
Her Majesty's Inspector