

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



28 April 2021

Michael Astley
Principal
St Peter's Church of England Academy
Fenton Manor
Fenton
Stoke-on-Trent
ST4 2RR

Dear Mr Astley

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of St Peter's Church of England Academy

Following my remote inspection with Lucy Bruce, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), 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:

- consider how pupils' learning can be enhanced by linking learning between different subjects.

Context

- Two members of the academy council, which is responsible for governance, have left since the previous inspection. Three new members have joined.
- Around 90% of pupils were educated at home at the start of the spring term. Nearly 60% of pupils deemed vulnerable by school leaders attended school. Half of pupils with an education, health and care plan were on site each day.
- Nearly all pupils were attending on site at the time of this inspection. One class of Year 7 pupils was working at home.

Main findings

- Faculty leaders have audited their curriculums since the last inspection in May 2019. They checked to make sure their plans met the ambition of the national curriculum as a minimum. They used these plans to design 'learning journeys' for pupils. Leaders wanted pupils to understand their progression through schemes of learning over time. Work on the curriculum has continued during the pandemic.
- The transition from learning at home to learning in the classroom has been smooth. Leaders said this is because the curriculum did not change substantially. For example, in Year 10 theology, pupils were learning about the pillars of Islam during the third national lockdown. They have continued this work on Islam since their return to the school.
- Teachers had to reflect on the order in which they taught their subjects when pupils were learning at home. There have been small changes to the curriculum due to remote learning. For example, in English, pupils in Years 7 and 8 were due to study a play by Shakespeare. The faculty leader swapped this with a unit of work on non-fiction. Teachers could adapt this to online delivery more easily.
- The English and humanities faculties have worked together to look at how knowledge connects across subject curriculums. For example, teachers considered how the history curriculum could support pupils' learning in English when writing war poetry. However, this collaboration is not yet consistent across the academy. As a result, opportunities to enhance pupils' learning across the curriculum are not fully developed in all subjects.
- Teachers have been trying to find out what pupils can remember since they returned to school. Teachers have set quizzes and mini assessments. These have helped to identify gaps in learning. Leaders will use information from these assessments to better inform their planning after Easter. Teachers are

revising previous learning with Year 11 pupils. Teachers are considering how to further support pupils with their plans when they leave school.

- Improving attainment in reading is a priority for leaders. There are nurture classes for younger pupils who find reading difficult. These pupils have one-to-one support with reading every day. During the third national lockdown, the Year 7 nurture group had their lessons in school. Leaders are working to encourage a love of reading across the school. All pupils have had access to an online library since October 2020. Only two thirds of pupils are using this regularly.
- A small group of pupils were accessing work online at the time of this inspection. Leaders sent the Year 7 nurture class home due to a confirmed case of COVID-19. They provided paper packs for these pupils to complete at home. This is successfully enabling these pupils to continue to access the planned curriculum.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) continued during the third national lockdown. Their key workers joined online lessons and provided extra resources. Some teaching assistants had 'doorstep' conversations with pupils to help them with their learning. Leaders watched remote lessons. They gave advice to teachers so that they could make their resources more accessible for pupils with SEND.
- Academy councillors are knowledgeable and well informed. They hold school leaders to account by asking challenging questions. There are working groups on the quality of education and safeguarding within the academy council. Councillors have challenged leaders to make sure standards are equally high in all subject faculties.
- The trust has encouraged an approach to the curriculum that is based on recent research. It has provided training for all leaders of the curriculum. There are trust-wide subject faculty networks which help with this work. Financial support from the trust has helped to remove barriers to pupils' learning. For example, they have provided the school with additional laptops for remote learning. The trust's director of school improvement has met with senior leaders. She questioned them about the impact of their work. She has also had discussions with faculty leaders to check their progress with the curriculum, including its delivery and how this supports pupils' learning. The trust's challenge is supporting leaders effectively to develop the curriculum.

Evidence

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

We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 17 free-text responses, and 84 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the academy council, the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Woodard multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Lichfield, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Stoke-on-Trent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lisa Strong
Her Majesty's Inspector