

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Richard Woods
Headteacher
Hanson Academy
Sutton Avenue
Swain House Road
Bradford
West Yorkshire
BD2 1JP

Dear Mr Woods

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Hanson Academy

Following my remote inspection with Timothy Jenner, 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 have serious weaknesses.

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 was judged to have serious weaknesses at its previous section 5 inspection. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in March 2020.

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 information about pupils' prior learning is used consistently well to plan the next steps in the teaching of the curriculum.

Context

- There have been few staffing changes since the previous inspection in March 2020.
- Approximately nine out of 10 pupils were educated at home during the period of national restrictions in the spring term 2021. Around two thirds of vulnerable pupils and all pupils with an education, health and care plan attended school during this period.
- Most pupils were attending school at the time of this inspection. A small number of pupils in Year 11 were self-isolating due to COVID-19.

Main findings

- Despite the challenges of the national restrictions, you and the leadership team have been determined that all pupils will have access to education during the recent circumstances. You have listened to pupils' views and have made changes to how remote education is delivered. As a result, over time, pupils' engagement in this has increased. Parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online Parent View survey were overwhelmingly positive about the school's approach to remote education. One parent, typical of many, wrote: 'The work the school has done during the pandemic is incredible - the home learning was excellent'.
- Prior to the pandemic, you were in the process of reviewing and developing the school's curriculum. You had plans in place to allocate more curriculum time to key stage 3. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, this work was interrupted. This term, senior leaders, with the support of a national leader of education, have had a renewed focus on accelerating this work. You intend to implement the revised curriculum for September 2021.
- Teachers are using a range of assessment approaches to check what pupils know and remember. In English and mathematics, teachers use this information effectively to focus on what pupils need to learn next. This enables them to build on pupils' prior learning and address any gaps in pupils' knowledge. This effective use of assessment information is not consistent in all subjects.
- Pupils in Year 11 are continuing to study their chosen subjects. They receive extra help to catch up, if needed. Leaders have provided pupils in Years 11 and 13 with appropriate careers guidance to support their next steps in education and training. Pupils in Year 11 and sixth form students told us that they value the support and guidance that they have received.

- Leaders have well-thought-through plans for remote education. Teachers have received training to enable them to deliver lessons remotely. When working remotely, pupils have access to a combination of 'live' and pre-recorded lessons that match the school's usual curriculum.
- Reading is a whole-school priority. Leaders have made sure that staff know how important reading is for pupils' future success. All staff who support pupils with learning to read have received effective training. Leaders' focus on developing pupils' love of reading has continued. This is beginning to have an impact. Pupils are expected to read daily during form time. Pupils at the early stages of learning to read receive phonics sessions and extra reading support. This is helping pupils to catch up with learning to read.
- Leaders have improved the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The special needs coordinator has delivered specialist training for staff. More recently, leaders have provided regular opportunities for staff to share strategies for meeting the needs of pupils with SEND. This has helped to ensure that pupils with SEND receive the right support at the right time.
- Governors are highly skilled. They ask incisive questions of school leaders and hold them to account. Governors have correctly focused on checking leaders' actions to provide education for all pupils, including remotely. Because of the pandemic, governors have given greater priority to pupil and staff well-being. Staff appreciate this, as indicated through the Ofsted staff survey.
- The local authority's school improvement service has provided comprehensive support and challenge. This has helped to strengthen the leadership of the school. Leaders have welcomed the support. Additionally, the local authority has brokered an effective partnership with a local secondary school and the support of a national leader of education.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you and senior leaders, curriculum leaders, a national leader of education, representatives of those responsible for governance and representatives of the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also held discussions with a group of teachers and separate groups of pupils from Years 7, 11 and 13. We considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 44 free-text responses, and 110 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bradford. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jean Watt
Her Majesty's Inspector