

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



6 May 2021

Miss Lisa Francis
Headteacher
Leamore Primary School
Bloxwich Road
Leamore
Walsall
West Midlands
WS3 2BB

Dear Miss Francis

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Leamore Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Eve Morris, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 25 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 2018.

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 subject leaders' long-term curriculum plans place as much emphasis on the knowledge they want pupils to learn and remember as they do on the skills they want them to acquire
- ensure that teachers are secure in their understanding of how lesson sequencing over the long-term is developed.

Context

- The headteacher's position was made permanent in September 2019. The deputy headteacher was appointed as permanent in October 2019, following his interim senior leader post. The interim assistant headteacher was appointed in May 2020, following her interim senior leader post. The chair and vice chair of the governing body were both appointed in July 2018.
- Approximately half of the pupils were educated at home when the school was closed to some pupils at the start of the spring term. All vulnerable pupils and all those with an education, health and care (EHC) plan were attending on site at the start of the spring term.
- The overall level of pupil attendance during the inspection was 96.4%.
- At the time of this inspection, a small percentage of staff were absent due to COVID-19. Leaders were able to manage these absences through existing staff capacity.

Main findings

- Leaders have built a curriculum that is challenging, broad and balanced. They have ensured that pupils, whether on site or at home, have continued to engage in their learning across the full range of subjects, including music and art. Wherever possible, leaders have remained faithful to their original planned curriculum. They have made sure that the curriculum content delivered remotely is similar to that taught in school. This has required some reordering of activities, without disrupting the sequence of learning and progression.
- Leaders have established a well-thought-out phonics programme where plans are sequential and build on what pupils already know. Teachers check pupils' learning regularly to address gaps. They adapt lessons as necessary. They have ensured that reading books are aligned to the sounds pupils know. Leaders have a good understanding of pupils' strengths and areas for development in reading.
- Leaders are developing a love of reading throughout the school. For example, during the summer holidays they invited pupils to exchange their reading

books in school. This allowed pupils access to high-quality texts when libraries were closed. Books chosen to read in class are suitably challenging, such as 'Street Child' and 'The Diary of Anne Frank'.

- In mathematics, leaders reflected on the scheme which they introduced after the last inspection. They found that it did not enable pupils to return to previous themes with sufficient frequency to be able to commit learning to their long-term memory. They have now a curriculum plan in place which enables them to do this. Leaders have seen a greater engagement and enthusiasm from pupils in their learning because they can see more clearly the progress they are making.
- Some of leaders' plans in the wider curriculum do not focus sufficiently well on the knowledge pupils should acquire. However, leaders check whether teachers plan lessons that are sequential and build up the knowledge over time that they want pupils to learn and remember. Leaders recognise that there is more to do in training them to plan learning sequentially over the long term.
- Leaders have suitable plans in place for the small number of pupils still isolating at home. Lessons in school now include the more practical aspects of the curriculum that were more difficult to carry out at home. Leaders have given careful consideration to how those still working remotely will access any missed learning. They have put in place support sessions in the afternoon and restarted the breakfast club to enable pupils to catch up.
- Leaders have been successful in encouraging all vulnerable pupils and those with EHC plans to attend school regularly during the third national lockdown. This has enabled staff to maintain daily face-to-face contact with pupils. It has also ensured that they continued to address pupils' targets in their support plans. Staff have provided these pupils with the same level of internal support that was in place before the latest lockdown. However, some external services, such as speech and language therapy, have not been available on site. Where any pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities were working remotely, staff set bespoke work and provided effective support online or over the phone throughout the school day.
- Governors are mindful of the additional workload of senior leaders at this time. They have ensured that there is a distributed leadership structure in place. They have also remained focused on the curriculum. They have invited subject leaders, including leaders of subjects such as music, to make presentations, and be questioned closely by them.
- Leamore has a successful support partnership with a local outstanding primary school. This has led to a strengthened and stable leadership and ensured that systems in place for monitoring and evaluation are more robust.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders. They met the chair and vice chair of the governing body. They also met the headteacher of a local partner school to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown. Inspectors also met with a group of seven pupils and heard three pupils read.

They looked at samples of remote lesson activities and pupils' work, with a specific focus on early reading, mathematics and the wider curriculum, including music. They took account of 20 responses to Ofsted's Parent View, 20 parents' free-text comments and 23 responses to the staff questionnaire.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims
Her Majesty's Inspector