

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



1 July 2021

Elisa Entwistle
Gloucester and Forest Alternative Provision School
Russet House
35 Russet Close
Tuffley
Gloucester
Gloucestershire
GL4 0RQ

Dear Mrs Entwistle

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Gloucester and Forest Alternative Provision School

Following my visit to your school on 23 June 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the monitoring inspection 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 improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. I discussed the impact of the pandemic with you and have taken that into account in my evaluation.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action in order for the school to become a good school.

The school should take further action to ensure that:

- high expectations, including for pupil attendance, are applied consistently across all three of the school's sites
- work to secure a well-constructed and sequenced curriculum across all subjects is completed.

Context

School leaders' priorities rightly changed in response to COVID-19 restrictions and the impact these had on pupils. Staff worked to support, and keep in contact with, pupils and their families. There has been increased staff absence due to COVID-19. Improvements to the curriculum and pupils' attendance have been interrupted.

Following the school's last section 5 inspection, the management committee was reformed. This committee is now well established. You have recruited a new member of staff to lead on the development of the curriculum.

Main findings

You continue to provide strong leadership for the school. Working with integrity, you make sure that understanding pupils' needs is at the heart of the school's work. Staff build positive relations and provide the help pupils need to succeed. Plans for pupils are created based on what will make the biggest difference to them. Transitions to mainstream schools, when they happen, are managed well.

The management committee has the knowledge and experience to challenge, as well as support, the school's work. You work effectively with others, including external advisers, to check the progress of the school. You use information to make the right adjustments to your plans. Detailed action plans help staff remain focused on the key priorities. Leaders have an accurate picture of the strengths and the next steps needed for the school.

There have been some barriers to improvement. The impact of COVID-19 has hampered some planned actions, in particular the development of the curriculum across all phases. You are aware that there is more to do to ensure that there are high expectations across the three school sites. For example, there are inconsistencies in how well attendance is improving. Some older pupils do not have positive attitudes towards attending school. Too few pupils, particularly in the Russet site, attend well.

You and your staff understand that providing a high-quality curriculum is likely to promote good attendance and learning. The curriculum lead is knowledgeable and has begun to create an ambitious, sequenced curriculum across all phases. However, curriculum plans in different subjects are not finalised. As a result, teachers do not have

clear guidance about how pupils' learning builds on previous knowledge and is, therefore, helping pupils to know and remember more.

Staff have worked well to improve the culture of reading. At the Joys Green Centre, staff have a system to assess pupils' phonic knowledge and provide appropriate reading books. Reading is at the heart of the curriculum, and staff have agreed which high-quality books pupils will read and enjoy.

Additional support

Local authority officers continue to support the school well. They recognise that you and the management committee are now well placed to organise the support you need. Rigorous and detailed specific reviews support leaders to recognise important next steps to improvement.

You also benefit from support provided by an independent school improvement partner. This continuing support, challenge and guidance is enabling you to methodically tackle the priorities from the previous section 5 inspection.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, staff, the chair and vice-chair of the management committee and representatives of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I looked at a range of documentary evidence, including the school's evaluation of its performance, the school improvement plan and documents relating to governance. I also talked to pupils about their learning and their experiences attending the school. I considered comments from Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and responses to the staff survey.

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

Yours sincerely

Tonwen Empson
Her Majesty's Inspector