

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



20 September 2021

Stephanie Dyce
Executive headteacher
Hall Park Academy
Mansfield Road
Eastwood
Nottingham
Nottinghamshire
NG16 3EA

Dear Mrs Dyce

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Hall Park Academy

Following my visit with Deborah Mosley, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), Peter Stonier, (HMI) and Jackie Thornalley, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 13-14 July 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and 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 since the school's most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in December 2019. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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

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

Leaders and managers are not taking effective action towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

The trust's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

PROTECT-INSPECTION



I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Redhill Academy Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Nottinghamshire County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Rachel Tordoff
Her Majesty's Inspector

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 13 and 14 July 2021

Context

Leaders have not been able to implement all of their plans to improve the school, due to the pandemic. For example, plans to develop extended writing across the curriculum in Years 7 and 8 have not been implemented. Leaders' plans to widen pupils' involvement in activities that enrich the curriculum have been delayed.

Some changes have been made to the curriculum. For instance, in science and design and technology (DT), leaders have altered curriculum plans to include practical activities that pupils could not complete remotely.

The pandemic has had an impact on pupils' attendance and continues to do so. During the inspection, some pupils in Year 10 were being educated remotely at home, due to issues related to COVID-19.

Since the additional monitoring inspection in March 2021, the deputy headteacher has taken over the responsibility for safeguarding.

The progress made towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation

Leaders have successfully tackled the areas that were judged to be weak at the previous inspection. The arrangements for pupils who attend alternative provision are secure. Leaders have effective oversight of this area of their work. The improvements they have made mean that safeguarding is now effective. Leaders have also improved the curriculums in modern foreign languages (MFL) and English. However, they have not ensured that other aspects of the provision remain of a high-enough quality. Inspectors found significant weaknesses in the quality of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Leaders work closely with alternative providers to design a suitable programme for each pupil. Pupils attending alternative provision remain on the school's roll. Daily calls to providers ensure that leaders know quickly if there are any concerns about pupils' attendance or behaviour, or any safeguarding issues. Half termly visits allow leaders to speak directly with these pupils and check that they are following suitable courses. Year 11 pupils attending alternative provision receive one-to-one advice about their next steps. Pupils leaving alternative provision this year have all secured college placements for September 2021.

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders give pupils the right support to keep them safe. For example, pupils learn about the impact of female genital mutilation and know how to stay safe online. Risk assessments for the most vulnerable pupils identify appropriate actions to minimise the risks they face. These assessments are reviewed regularly in case a pupil's circumstances change.

Leaders, staff and those responsible for governance are well trained and understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Recent training has raised staff awareness of the risks posed by sexual violence and harassment. Safeguarding records, sometimes, lack precise information about leaders' actions to keep pupils safe. Leaders intend to change how they record safeguarding concerns. They are confident that these changes will help them to track and monitor these concerns more closely. Those responsible for governance are kept well informed by leaders about safeguarding arrangements.

Most curriculum plans are detailed and well sequenced. They highlight the important knowledge that pupils need to know and when. Revised plans in MFL, for example ensure that pupils develop their knowledge of phonics, grammar and vocabulary over time. In DT, pupils experimenting with different bread ingredients could explain to an inspector how they would build on their findings in the next lesson. In science, important topics such as materials and forces are revisited, so that pupils deepen their understanding.

Many teachers use their subject knowledge to check what pupils know and clarify any misconceptions. 'Quick-fire' questions at the start of each DT lesson, for example highlight any gaps in pupils' knowledge. However, some teachers do not adapt their plans swiftly enough when it is clear that pupils cannot remember important information. Not all teachers stress the importance of good presentation and accurate spellings. Pupils' work, sometimes, includes incorrect spellings of specialist terms that are left uncorrected.

Leaders prioritise reading. They accurately identify pupils who need extra help with their reading. One-to-one and in-class support helps these pupils to read fluently and with increased confidence. Pupils enjoy reading books they have chosen during daily 'drop-everything-and-read' sessions. In September 2021, leaders plan to introduce subject-specific journals to the library for pupils to read, as well as including reading as part of the sixth-form study programme.

Leaders identify pupils with SEND accurately. They do not focus closely enough on how well pupils with SEND achieve across the curriculum. Leaders provide teachers with information about how to support each pupil's needs. However, they do not check that teachers use this information to help pupils with SEND know and remember what they have been taught. Teachers do not routinely support pupils with SEND to make progress through the curriculum. Some teachers do not check that these pupils have secured the knowledge they need before moving on. Pupils with SEND told inspectors that how well they are supported depends on the teachers they have. Three quarters of the parents and carers of children with SEND who responded to Ofsted's survey, Parent View expressed concerns about the provision their children receive.

Small numbers of pupils in Years 7 and 8 do not study modern foreign languages. Most of these are pupils with SEND. They receive extra help with their English and

mathematics. However, this additional support is of a poor quality. Curriculum plans for this provision are not ambitious. They do not include enough detail about what pupils need to know and when, particularly in English. The plans do not link closely to what pupils know already. Teachers do not plan tasks focused on improving writing skills, despite this being a priority for many of these pupils. Pupils who attend this provision are not being helped to overcome their barriers to learning. The quality of their work declines over time. From September 2021, all Year 7 pupils will study MFL.

Some pupils and parents are concerned about bullying in school, particularly parents of children with SEND. However, leaders' bullying records suggest that few incidents of bullying occur. Pupils involved in racist incidents are given extra help to modify their behaviour. Leaders know that all incidents of bullying must be accurately identified so that they can respond appropriately.

Many pupils want to learn and do well. They are, generally, polite and respectful to each other and to staff. Pupils told inspectors that the behaviour of others can sometimes stop them learning. Since returning to school on site, the number of pupils excluded for a fixed period because of poor behaviour has increased. The routines in place to manage COVID-19 mean that leaders are not able to use the usual strategies to avoid excluding pupils. However, intensive support from leaders is helping some pupils who have been excluded more than once to improve their behaviour.

Before the pandemic, pupils' attendance was improving. COVID-19 has had a significant impact on pupils' attendance. Since March 2021, attendance has declined compared to the school's usual rates, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders' actions are beginning to improve the attendance of some pupils who are regularly absent from school.

Leaders adapt the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum in response to local and national issues, for example racism in sport. Pupils learn about different cultures and faiths and understand what it means to be a British citizen. Activities to enrich the curriculum are being re-introduced following the pandemic. Pupils benefit from well-planned careers advice and guidance, preparing them well for their next steps. Most pupils secure an appropriate education, employment or training placement when they leave school.

The sixth-form study programme is ambitious. It provides students with appropriate pathways to meet their different needs and interests. Students are aspirational and attend school well. They appreciate the support of their teachers to bridge the gap between their studies in key stages 4 and 5. Teachers' expectations of students are high. Well-planned curriculums help students remember what they have learned. Teachers use their specialist knowledge effectively to challenge students to achieve well. Students are positive about their sixth-form experience. They are supportive of each other and enjoy being role models for younger pupils. Most students complete

their courses and take up a university or apprenticeship offer. Leaders have plans to improve the life-skills programme to ensure that students are well prepared for adulthood.

Most staff are proud to work at the school. They enjoy their work and are motivated in their roles. While most say that the school is well led, some staff do not think leaders take their workload into account. Teachers new to the profession feel well supported. They appreciate opportunities to learn from more experienced colleagues.

Governors and trustees provide leaders with an appropriate balance of challenge and support. They are aware that the pandemic has slowed down some of the school's improvement. Governors check what they are being told by leaders during visits to the school. They play close attention to the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. However, they are not sufficiently well informed about the quality of the provision for pupils with SEND.

Priorities for further improvement

- Pupils with SEND do not all receive a high-quality education. Leaders must ensure that these pupils benefit from an ambitious curriculum, that is planned to meet their needs precisely and implemented effectively, so that they achieve well.

Additional support

Following the previous inspection, trust leaders made sure that the school's safeguarding practices and procedures were secure, particularly in relation to the school's use of alternative provision. The trust also provided curriculum leaders with help to develop their curriculum plans.

The chief executive officer knows the school well. He works closely with school leaders to organise appropriate support and training. The trust's sixth-form leader has been based at the school this past year, focused on improving sixth-form procedures and systems. Staff appreciate training opportunities available through the trust to improve their practice.

Trust leaders intend to carry out an audit of the provision for pupils with SEND this term.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work and reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, curriculum plans, information about pupils' attendance, behaviour and exclusions, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the headteacher and other senior leaders, the designated safeguarding leader, the leader responsible for the provision for pupils with SEND and curriculum leaders responsible for science, MFL, DT, and PSHE education. Inspectors observed some pupils reading to members of staff. They spoke with groups of pupils and staff, including staff who are new to the teaching profession

The lead inspector met with the chair of the local governing body, who is also a trustee, and two other governors. She also met with the chief executive officer of the Redhill Academy Trust. The lead inspector spoke on the telephone to representatives of the three alternative providers used by the school.

Inspectors considered 89 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 57 free-text responses, and 38 staff questionnaires.