

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



10 March 2021

Jayne Bartlett
Headteacher
Shenley Academy
Shenley Lane
Northfield
Birmingham
West Midlands
B29 4HE

Dear Dr Bartlett

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Shenley Academy

Following my remote inspection with Ian Tustian, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 23 February 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 special measures.

Following changes to government guidance and the imposition of COVID-19 (coronavirus) lockdown restrictions, 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 require special measures at its previous section 5 inspection. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in October 2018.

Having considered all the evidence and taking into account the impact of COVID-19 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:

- build upon the strengths of the current delivery of the school's curriculum to ensure a smooth and swift transition back to educating all pupils on site.

Context

- Since the previous section 5 inspection, there have been significant leadership changes, including your appointment as headteacher. New arrangements are in place for overseeing the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Many teaching staff have left the school and new staff appointed. Staff turnover in the current academic year is much lower than in previous years.
- Across the autumn term 2020, 80% of pupils had to be educated remotely at some point. Years 8 and 9 were particularly affected as all pupils in these year groups had to stay at home for two weeks.
- At the time of this inspection, just over 5% of pupils were being educated on site. Of those pupils that the school identified as being vulnerable, approximately one quarter were attending on site. 15% of pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan were learning in school.

Main findings

- Well supported by the trust, you have gone to great lengths to help pupils continue their planned education in the current circumstances. As well as laptops and internet access, you have provided books, resources and other equipment as needed to remove any barriers that may prevent pupils from participating in lessons from home. Teachers think carefully about how best to deliver the content of each lesson to keep pupils fully involved throughout the day. Staff are quick to contact a pupil who does not attend an online lesson. As a result of these actions, participation in remote education is high.
- You and your leadership team have developed a curriculum to meet your high ambition for all pupils. Some aspects of the curriculum cannot be delivered as effectively remotely as they could be in school. You have made sensible decisions about what to change, move or delay teaching. For example, physical education now encompasses a focus on mental and physical well-being as well as academic rigour and, where feasible, support for pupils to be physically active.
- You have not let the challenges of COVID-19 get in the way of your continuous drive for school improvement. Instead, you have grasped the opportunity to reflect upon, and refine, the delivery of your curriculum and the central role that assessment plays in its effectiveness.

- Teachers deliver all lessons live, in real time, to all pupils, whether they are learning remotely or in school. This means that all pupils are receiving direct teaching from their subject teacher. Vulnerable pupils learning remotely have additional support through extra contact from staff. Staff provide support for vulnerable pupils attending school throughout the day. The pupils that we spoke to said that the support they receive is helpful. Pupils who need extra support to read more fluently get the help they need, either face to face or through video conferencing.
- You have assisted Year 11 pupils to collate evidence in support of their GCSE attainment while learning remotely and have maintained individual careers discussions with them. You plan to continue with an intense 'academic' focus when they return to school. This will include additional time for English and mathematics during tutor time.
- During the autumn term, you made significant alterations to systems to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Your SEND team has worked hard to adapt these for the current circumstances. These processes, now embedded, need further time before the impact can be seen in full. Nevertheless, the efforts of staff are already making a positive difference. As a result, all pupils with an EHC plan can access appropriate education in the current circumstances.
- There is a strong line of sight from the executive team of the trust through to leaders in the academy. Those responsible for governance ensure that the extensive support from the trust leads to an improved experience for pupils. As a result, the school is very well placed to deliver education at the current time.
- You, your staff and the trust are acutely aware that sharply focused assessment is key to ensuring a smooth and swift transition back into school once it is fully open. All are keen that pupils lose no learning time. It is agreed by leaders at all levels that, for this to happen, teachers need to focus on sharp, accurate assessment of pupils' understanding. The curriculum clearly identifies the essential knowledge that pupils need at each stage to make progress in all subjects. Assessment is built inherently into the delivery of the curriculum. Therefore, teachers are well placed to do what is needed.

Evidence

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

We also looked at examples of curriculum plans, teachers' planning for online lessons, pupils' work produced in live online lessons and teachers' assessments. We

looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 57 free-text responses, and 46 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the E-ACT multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Birmingham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sandra Hayes
Her Majesty's Inspector