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Janette Vincent
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Dear Ms Vincent

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Childwall Science and Sports Academy

Following my remote inspection with Elizabeth Stevens, 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 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 three successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in June 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 parents and carers are well informed about the curriculum and pupils' learning.

Context

- Since the previous monitoring inspection, there have been significant changes to staffing. A new deputy headteacher and subject leaders for mathematics and science have been appointed, replacing staff who have left the school. Four teachers in the science department and three teachers in the mathematics department are new to the school. Three other teachers have joined the school.
- Two new members of the Lydiate Learning Trust board have been appointed. All but two members of the Academy Governance Committee (AGC) are also new.
- Over the first part of the spring term, well over nine tenths of pupils were educated at home. During this period, over one half of all vulnerable pupils and about one quarter of all pupils with education, health and care plans were in school.
- At the time of this inspection, very nearly all pupils were attending school on site.

Main findings

- You and other leaders have ensured that the school continues to improve. Subject leaders have reviewed and re-organised the curriculum and how it is taught. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, teachers have built on this work and ensured that pupils have continued to learn more and remember more.
- The curriculum is planned to enable pupils to systematically build their knowledge. For example, the mathematics and science curriculums are designed to help pupils become confident in applying and using their knowledge in increasingly complex ways. Teachers complete careful checks on what pupils can remember as part of the school's consistent approach to learning. Middle leaders and teachers made sure that they had identified the knowledge pupils had remembered so that they could plan appropriate learning tasks for as soon as pupils returned to school. You are confident that teachers are successfully supporting any pupils who need to catch up.
- You and other leaders have set up a programme of extra teaching for pupils in Year 11 who may have fallen behind. Teachers have been careful to build the confidence of pupils in Years 11 and 13 as teachers collect the evidence needed for pupils' final GCSE and A-level grades. Teachers are still using information from their assessments to make sure that teaching helps these pupils to learn more.

- While staff are clear about what you and other leaders expect in the curriculum, some parents who shared their views with us felt that you could do more to tell them about what pupils are learning.
- The school's well-thought-out curriculum plans meant that subject leaders and teachers only had to make small adaptations to allow pupils to continue their learning during the recent partial school closure. In some subjects, such as history and geography, teachers followed their normal curriculum plans in full. However, science teachers changed the order of some topics and delayed practical work until all pupils were back in school.
- You and other leaders place a high priority on developing pupils' reading. You have trained staff so that they make reading part of the classroom routines. Teachers use their regular checks on pupils' reading to identify which pupils need extra support. This support is provided by staff who have received additional training. For example, specially trained staff provide a programme aimed at developing the phonic knowledge of those pupils who find reading hardest.
- Teachers provide remote education for any pupils not in school. This is planned so that pupils learn their normal subjects. During the recent period when the school was closed to most pupils, remote education included online live lessons. You and other leaders have continued with this approach for any groups of pupils not able to learn on site. However, restrictions in the technology available mean that this is not yet possible for individual pupils who are absent.
- You and other leaders ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or other vulnerabilities are well supported and can learn. The special educational needs coordinator provides effective training to help teachers to identify which pupils may be vulnerable and establish what their learning and other needs are. You pay particular attention to helping pupils who have any anxiety or other mental health needs.
- Trustees and governors have a detailed understanding of the curriculum improvements made by you and other leaders. They have used their knowledge of the school to challenge you and other leaders to ensure that school improvement continues. During the pandemic, they have checked that pupils have continued to learn well and have been properly supported.
- Staff have benefited from carefully planned support provided by the trust or organised by the trust from elsewhere. For example, the science leader worked with a subject expert from another school to ensure that her plans for the curriculum were suitable. The school contributes to the wider work of the trust. For example, a senior leader is supporting the trust's initial teacher education programme.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other leaders, groups of pupils and staff, the chief executive officer (CEO) and the director of school improvement for the Lydiate Learning Trust, and members of the AGC to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also scrutinised documents, including minutes of recent meetings of the AGC and documents concerning the school's improvement. We looked at 24 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 10 free-text responses, and 61 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the CEO of the Lydiate Learning Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Liverpool City Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

David Selby
Her Majesty's Inspector