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Kathryn Evans
Principal
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Dear Mrs Evans

Additional monitoring inspection of Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy

Following my inspection with Rachel Goodwin, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 24 and 25 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.

This monitoring inspection was carried out on site due to significant concerns about safeguarding.

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 December 2019.

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.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and those responsible for governance should take further action to:

- quickly refocus the training that teachers are getting so that they are well equipped to support the needs of pupils and students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) when they are all learning in school.

Context

- The school joined the Ormiston Academies Trust and a new chair of the local governing body was appointed in February 2020. You joined the school in April 2020. Since the last inspection, 15 teachers have left the school and nine have joined. A new special educational needs coordinator was appointed in January 2020 and a new subject leader for mathematics joined in February 2021.
- In the autumn term 2020, about three quarters of all pupils learned from home on at least one occasion. This affected pupils in Years 9 and 11 more than other year groups.
- At the time of this inspection, a small proportion of pupils were attending school. This included about three quarters of pupils with an education, health and care plan and about one quarter of all vulnerable pupils. All other pupils were being educated remotely.
- At the time of this inspection, a very small proportion of staff were absent due to COVID-19.

Main findings

- Improvements over the last year have underpinned your success in ensuring that all pupils can access an education during these challenging times. Weaknesses in safeguarding have been tackled well, and positive changes to the curriculum mean that pupils are continuing their studies and receiving the care that they need at this time.
- You and other leaders have established an effective culture of safeguarding. Staff, pupils and students say that safeguarding is at the forefront of everybody's minds. You ensure that the systems for checking that all adults are safe to work with pupils and students are firmly in place. Furthermore, you have made sure that the checks on pupils' attendance, including students in the sixth form, are appropriate. Staff diligently record any concerns about pupils' safety. However, there is more to do to ensure that safeguarding records better reflect the actions that leaders are taking to support pupils and students.
- Leaders, teachers and other adults are better at identifying the needs of pupils and students with SEND than was the case in the past. Pupils, students and their families are more involved in the creation of support plans. Teachers are beginning to use these plans more assiduously when they deliver the curriculum. For example, teachers have made effective use of training to

support pupils and students with SEND when they are learning remotely. Teaching assistants are also providing useful support for these pupils and students to ensure their needs are well met. You have prioritised training that is helping staff to support these pupils and students when they are working remotely. However, there is more to do to ensure that staff are well equipped to support the needs of pupils and students with SEND when they are learning in school.

- Pupils and students have access to an improved curriculum that is broad and ambitious. Subject leaders are continuing to review and improve their curriculum plans. Increasingly, teachers are making more considered decisions about what pupils and students should know and remember. This is helping teachers to deliver remote education effectively. There are effective systems in place to check what pupils have learned and to offer feedback. Leaders listen carefully to the views of parents and carers to make improvements to the remote education offer. Consequently, the engagement of pupils and students in remote learning has improved in recent weeks.
- You ensure that pupils and students have the same opportunities to learn in school and remotely. This includes those who are vulnerable. Staff are providing their usual additional care for vulnerable pupils and students who are attending school. You and other staff are working constructively with families to support vulnerable pupils and students who are working remotely. In recent weeks, the proportion of vulnerable pupils and students attending school has increased.
- Following the full reopening of school in September 2020, you ensured that pupils' reading skills were assessed. This included pupils in Year 7 and those who are at the early stages of learning to read. Staff work well with individual pupils to identify their reading needs in greater detail. These pupils are benefiting from a range of well-targeted programmes to support their different reading abilities. You are ensuring that this support continues when pupils work remotely.
- Pupils in Year 11 and students in Year 13 are covering all aspects of the usual curriculum. In some subjects, these pupils and students are helpfully supported by additional tuition so that they can catch up on missed learning. Pupils and students, including those educated in school and remotely, are receiving the guidance and advice they need to make decisions about their next steps in education, employment and training.
- The local governing body supports and challenges you and other leaders effectively. Governors have a clear understanding of the progress that leaders are making in tackling the issues identified in the previous inspection. They use their expertise well to seek the necessary assurances that leaders are providing an education at this time.

- You and other leaders are benefiting from a range of support from the trust to help review practices and train staff. This has had a positive impact on many aspects of the school's work, including improvements to safeguarding, the curriculum and to the support that pupils and students with SEND receive. The local authority has provided essential safeguarding training so that all staff are better equipped to look after pupils and students. Support from a specialist leader of education from a local secondary school has helped subject leaders to strengthen their curriculum plans.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted on site due to concerns about safeguarding in the previous inspection. We spoke to you and other senior leaders to discuss leaders' actions to improve the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures and to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown. We also spoke with trustees, the regional executive headteacher, members of the local governing body, and a representative of the local authority.

We spoke with groups of middle leaders, teachers, support staff and groups of pupils and students. We scrutinised safeguarding records and the support plans for pupils and students with SEND. We observed the education and support that pupils and students in school are currently receiving. We also evaluated the work that pupils and students have completed in recent weeks.

We also examined curriculum plans and records of the meetings of the local governing body. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 43 free-text responses, and 82 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local governing body, the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive of the Ormiston Academies multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Halton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Michael Pennington
Her Majesty's Inspector