

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Jacqueline Bowen
Headteacher
The East Manchester Academy
60 Grey Mare Lane
Beswick
Manchester
M11 3DS

Dear Miss Bowen

Additional monitoring inspection of The East Manchester Academy

Following my inspection with Jonathan Smart, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 10 and 11 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, most of Ofsted's monitoring inspections are being carried out remotely. This inspection, however, took place on site due to significant concerns about safeguarding at the last inspection.

The inspection took place because the school was judged to require special measures at its previous section 5 inspection. The school was last inspected in December 2019.

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.

Safeguarding is effective.

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

- embed the new behaviour system to ensure that pupils know exactly what is expected of them once the school re-opens to all pupils
- strengthen further the support that teachers and teaching assistants provide to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) so that they learn effectively whether they are working in school or remotely.

Context

- Since the last inspection, 14 teachers have left the school and 17 have joined. A new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) was appointed to the senior leadership team in January 2020. A deputy headteacher, a head of English and a head of science joined the school in September 2020. An interim management board (IMB), responsible for local governance, was formed in February 2020.
- In the autumn term, about two thirds of all pupils have worked from home on at least one occasion. This has affected pupils in Year 8, 9 and 11 more than other year groups.
- At the time of this inspection, approximately one in ten pupils are attending school. This includes about three quarters of pupils with an education, health and care plan and about three quarters of all vulnerable pupils. All other pupils are being educated remotely.

Main findings

- You, other leaders and members of the IMB have taken the necessary actions to improve the culture of safeguarding at the school. You have taken effective steps to root out the endemic racism and homophobia noted in the previous inspection report. Leaders have implemented a carefully planned personal development curriculum that is focussed on fundamental British values, including tolerance and respect. Pupils told us that this work has resulted in far fewer incidents of anti-social behaviour and prejudiced-based bullying.
- Leaders have made changes to how unacceptable behaviour is dealt with. Teachers increasingly help pupils to understand how they should behave. Incidents of poor behaviour have decreased over time. Pupils, parents and carers and staff told us that, in their view, pupils' behaviour has improved significantly. Even so, the impact of the pandemic on pupils' behaviour is unknown. There will be more to do to make sure that the recent improvements are built upon once the school reopens to all pupils.
- You have improved the systems for promoting pupils' attendance. Pupils and their parents now get a better balance of support and challenge to encourage them to attend school regularly. Consequently, the attendance of all groups of

pupils improved in the autumn term. This work has also helped to improve the proportion of pupils who are engaging with education during the third national lockdown.

- Curriculum planning has been strengthened. Plans now include more detail about the knowledge that pupils should learn. This is helping teachers to deliver the curriculum more effectively in school and remotely. All pupils are studying the full range of subjects on the school's usual curriculum. Teachers receive useful feedback about the work that they provide to pupils. This means that teachers are able to refine their approaches to delivering the curriculum in the current challenging circumstances. As a result, pupils are continuing to learn what has been intended.
- You and other leaders continue to strengthen the support for pupils with SEND. The SENCo has improved systems to identify the needs of these pupils. Pupils with SEND that are working remotely enjoy regular contact with staff. This enables staff to identify the support that these pupils and their families need. Teachers and teaching assistants are starting to support the learning of pupils with SEND more effectively. However, this work is still in its infancy. Consequently, the support that pupils with SEND receive, whether they work from home or at school, is not always matched well enough to their individual needs.
- You are ensuring that vulnerable pupils and the children of key workers are well supported in school. Vigilant staff are quick to assist pupils so that they can learn and behave well. Vulnerable pupils that are working remotely are ably supported with equipment to help them access the curriculum. Staff speak to these pupils frequently to check on their learning and welfare.
- You have set appropriate expectations for pupils in Year 11. Teachers are ensuring that all of these pupils continue to cover the full curriculum content. Some pupils are being stretched further so that they can meet their own aspirations for the future. Pupils in Year 11 continue to benefit from guidance about their next steps in education, employment and training.
- You have identified that, since March 2020, some pupils' reading skills have stalled. This includes pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read and pupils with English as an additional language. Staff are helping these pupils to strengthen their ability to decode words, read fluently and understand subject-specific words. You ensure that these pupils are well supported both in school and when working remotely.
- Members of the IMB are clear about their roles and responsibilities. This group have valuable expertise which means they are able to support you and other leaders well. Members of the IMB have an accurate understanding of the school's current strengths and weaknesses. This includes a deep insight

into the additional challenges you and other staff are facing in ensuring the school continues to improve and that pupils receive an education.

- The IMB has benefited from external support from the National Governance Association and the Confederation of School Trusts. This has included an external review of governance and the implementation of the current practices of the IMB. The local authority has provided expertise to assist you and other leaders in strengthening safeguarding practices. Leaders have also accessed support from local schools and consultants to help them to plan and implement the new personal development curriculum effectively.

Evidence

We conducted the monitoring inspection on site due to concerns about safeguarding in the previous inspection. We held meetings with 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 the executive headteacher, trustees, members of the IMB, and a representative of the local authority.

We spoke with groups of middle leaders, teachers, pupils and parents. We scrutinised safeguarding, behaviour and attendance records. We reviewed the education and support that pupils are currently receiving. We also evaluated the work that pupils working at home and in school have completed in recent weeks.

We examined curriculum plans and records of the meetings of the IMB. We considered 88 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff. We also took account of the 41 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including the comments received by Ofsted's free-text facility.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the interim management board, the chair of the board of trustees and the executive headteacher of the Education and Leadership multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Manchester. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Michael Pennington
Her Majesty's Inspector