

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



17 March 2021

Clare Martin
Principal
Bradford Girls' Grammar School
Squire Lane
Bradford
West Yorkshire
BD9 6RB

Dear Mrs Martin

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Bradford Girls' Grammar School

Following my remote inspection with Helen Lane, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 23 February, 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 have serious weaknesses.

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 have serious weaknesses at its previous section 5 inspection. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in March 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.

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

- provide subject leaders with further training on the principles of effective curriculum design
- ensure that pupils practise reading books and other materials, at home and at school, that match the phonics sounds they know.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, there have been several changes in senior leadership and governance. A senior leader with responsibility for safeguarding was appointed in August 2019. The primary phase headteacher arrived in April 2020. The overall principal was appointed in September 2020. Five new governors have joined the governing body since the last inspection.
- In the autumn term 2020, approximately 80% of pupils experienced periods of remote education due to COVID-19.
- At the time of this inspection, around 90% of pupils were being educated at home. Just over 50% of pupils who are vulnerable and 35% of pupils with an education, health and care plan were educated on site.
- A small number of staff were absent due to COVID-19 at the time of this inspection.

Main findings

- Leaders and those responsible for governance have ensured that education has continued for pupils throughout the period when schools were only open to some children due to COVID-19 restrictions. You have made sure that pupils who need to work remotely have the necessary devices and support to be able to do so. Your teachers use a variety of methods to check how well pupils are remembering what they learn. As a result of these actions, pupils are engaging effectively with remote learning.
- You have recently reviewed the school's curriculum. You plan to allocate more time to key stage 3. There is more to do to ensure that all staff and governors understand the intent behind this change. Subject leaders require further training to decide the knowledge to be taught and the sequence of learning in all subjects across the school.
- Leaders prioritise early reading. Story time, phonics and reading lessons take place regularly for pupils at home and in school. Teachers promote pupils' enthusiasm for reading by organising events such as virtual poetry festivals and reading challenges. Leaders have recently implemented a new reading scheme. This now needs to be embedded. There is a programme of staff training to develop greater expertise in phonics and early reading. You

recognise that books and other reading materials are not consistently well matched to pupils' phonics knowledge.

- Vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive extra support from teaching assistants. Teaching assistants are providing reading support for pupils in school and for those working from home. Additional mathematics catch-up sessions are also taking place remotely. Teachers adapt lesson activities to help pupils with SEND understand their work. This support is effective because you have planned it and targeted it to those who need it most.
- Governors are supportive of leaders and staff. They understand the impact of the pandemic on the long-term and short-term priorities of the school. They have been involved in strategic decisions during the pandemic, such as risk assessments and the development of remote education. Governors have also maintained their own training in important areas such as safeguarding. As a result of these actions, governors provide appropriate challenge and support to the school.
- The school is drawing on support from a range of external partners, including a teaching school and a national leader of education. This support is focused on strategic developments such as the curriculum and leadership. External partners are providing effective strategic support.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We held meetings with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team and curriculum leaders. We had discussions with the special educational needs coordinator, and we observed a reading session. We held a meeting with governors to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also reviewed evidence of how you check pupils' engagement and feedback to them about their remote learning. We looked at 38 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. Due to technical difficulties, we were not able to look at responses to, Parent View, Ofsted's online parents' questionnaire. However, we did consider eight comments submitted by parents during the inspection.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chair of the board of trustees, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bradford. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Carl Sugden
Seconded Inspector