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Stacy McHale
Acting Principal
St Teresa's Catholic Primary Academy
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Dear Mrs McHale

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of St Teresa's Catholic Primary Academy

Following my remote inspection with Jonathan Leonard, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 27 and 28 January 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 March 2020.

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.

Context

- You joined the school as acting principal in August 2020. A teacher left the school in August 2020 and has been replaced by a teacher on a temporary contract.
- In the autumn term 2020, almost half of pupils spent some time being educated remotely because of COVID-19. This included all pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 5, as well as individuals in other year groups.
- The school was only open to vulnerable pupils and the children of key workers at the time of the inspection. Just over three quarters of pupils were learning remotely and the remainder were attending school. Almost all vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) were attending school at the time of the inspection.
- A member of staff has been absent since the summer term, but this is not related to COVID-19. Their role has been covered by several temporary teachers. Another member of staff is currently shielding.

Main findings

- Since taking up your post, you have wasted no time in reviewing and redesigning the school's curriculum. The St Francis and St Clare multi-academy company is actively supporting you in this. Your aim is to create a curriculum that builds knowledge, skills and vocabulary over time. Initially, you focused on a specific group of subjects, including English and mathematics. You have planned for how pupils will make progress in these subjects. Actions are in place to look at other subjects over the course of the next few terms. COVID-19 has slowed down some of your plans, but you have made realistic adjustments to these.
- Leaders and staff have transferred the usual curriculum to a remote education offer using an online learning tool. Pupils in school, supported by staff, access the same learning as pupils who are learning at home. Staff deliver remote learning through a combination of live lessons, pre-recorded lessons and other means. Leaders and teachers rightly pride themselves on the efforts they are making to engage pupils in remote learning. In many subjects, the remote learning is in line with what pupils would normally be learning in school. However, in some subjects, such as science, teachers have had to make adaptations. This is because some pupils do not have the required practical resources while learning at home. In subjects where leaders have redesigned the curriculum, for example history, the remote education offer builds on what pupils already know. However, this is not the case in other subjects, such as art.
- Almost all vulnerable pupils are attending school. Leaders and staff work closely with families and external agencies if this is not the case. Staff make

regular telephone calls to all pupils and their families who are working remotely. Staff use these calls to support pupils with their learning and any other issues that may arise. Leaders have set clear expectations on how often staff need to make these calls. Electronic devices and means to gain access to the internet are also provided to families who require them.

- Teachers in the Reception and key stage 1 classes have made phonics teaching a priority. Pupils in school and those at home continue with their daily phonics lessons. Online books from the school's reading scheme allow children to read regularly at home. This online facility makes it easier for staff to swap and allocate new books. Parents have access to videos that support them in helping their children with reading.
- Leaders expect staff to plan work that is matched to the needs of pupils with SEND. Teachers feel supported to do this. This is the case for pupils with SEND in school and for those who are being educated at home. Teachers provide alternative tasks if required. Staff organise online 'drop-in' sessions for any pupils who have struggled with work that has been set remotely. Focused interventions for pupils with SEND continue in school, but it is proving to be more challenging to organise these for pupils who are learning at home. Most external agencies are not currently coming into school. However, they are providing staff with training and information, so that staff can in turn help pupils who require tailored support.
- Those responsible for governance are continuing to support and challenge school leaders, but they are having to do this in a different way to normal. Currently, meetings are held through an online video conferencing platform. Governors have a very clear understanding of how the school's remote education offer is organised, including pupils' engagement levels.
- The multi-academy company is supporting the school in their improvement journey and during this period of partial school closure. They helped school leaders to put in place the remote education package. This reduced the pressure and workload on the acting principal and her team. The company continue to facilitate the sharing of good practice to support the school in their efforts to improve the curriculum.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We held meetings with the acting principal, the assistant principal, curriculum leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, staff and pupils. We also spoke with the chair of the local governing body, a representative of the Archdiocese of Birmingham, a representative of the local authority, the Catholic senior executive leader and a range of directors from the multi-academy company to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also looked at a wide range of lessons and activities in the remote education offer.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local governing body, the chair of the board of trustees and the Catholic senior executive leader of the St Francis and St Clare multi-academy company, the director of education for the Archdiocese of Birmingham, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Wolverhampton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Wayne Simner
Her Majesty's Inspector