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11 February 2021

Jane Barnes
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Barnes

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of St Wulstan's and St Edmund's Catholic Primary School and Nursery

Following my remote inspection with Garry White, 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 improvement.

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 has received four successive judgements of requires improvement. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in February 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.

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

- embed the recently implemented reading and phonics curriculums, ensuring that pupils can read with fluency and comprehension
- further develop curriculums across all subjects so that learning is planned and delivered effectively.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, a new assessment leader has been appointed. There have been two changes to the governing body. A new chair of governors and a staff governor have taken up their posts.
- In the autumn term 2020, approximately half of all pupils received a period of remote education. This included all pupils in the Year 3 class, all pupils in the Year 5 class and all pupils in a Year 1 and 2 class.
- At the time of this inspection, approximately one third of all pupils are in school. Approximately one third of vulnerable pupils are being taught in school. For every ten pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), approximately four pupils are attending.
- At the time of this inspection, a small proportion of staff were absent due to COVID-19. Leaders have made the necessary staffing arrangements to ensure that pupils, both in school and at home, continue to receive an education.

Main findings

- You and the school's leaders have ensured that all pupils have access to education whether they are learning at home or in school. Currently, pupils can access a broad range of curriculum subjects.
- Following the previous inspection, you and other leaders started work to review and improve curriculum plans. You have continued this work, despite the disruption caused by COVID-19 restrictions. This work has had a positive impact, especially on the science, geography and physical education curriculums. That said, there is more to do to ensure that curriculums are planned and delivered effectively in languages, art and design and technology.
- Each day, teachers plan and deliver lessons in English, mathematics and one other subject. The planned curriculum is the same for those pupils in school and for those working remotely.
- You have focused on improving the teaching of reading and phonics. For example, you introduced a new phonics and early reading curriculum in the autumn term 2020. Regardless of whether they are working in school or at

home, all children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 receive a daily phonics lesson. Older pupils who struggle with reading continue to receive support with phonics. Across the school, pupils have access to appropriate reading books. Teachers place a sharper focus on the teaching of grammar and comprehension in key stage 2. Your work in this area is beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' reading skills.

- Subject leaders have thought carefully about how to deliver the curriculum to pupils who are working at home. For example, leaders have adapted their curriculum plans to meet the needs of vulnerable pupils and those pupils with SEND. You have ensured that all vulnerable pupils have access to an electronic device in their home. Governors have helped you to source additional computer equipment for this group of pupils. You continue to encourage all pupils to engage in remote education, including those families who choose not to access the education that is on offer.
- You have high expectations for pupils with SEND. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has been proactive in addressing the challenges that this group of pupils face when working remotely. The SENCo checks how well teachers adapt their plans for pupils with SEND in each subject. Pupils with SEND continue to access a wide variety of additional support, such as help with their speech and language. Staff encourage this group of pupils to access education and provide appropriate support for families.
- Governors are increasingly effective at monitoring the school's work and holding leaders to account. For instance, in most subjects, members of the governing body check carefully the content of leaders' curriculum plans. Governors ensure that these plans match the expectations set out in the national curriculum. This means they are well placed to offer support and challenge about the education that is being offered in the current circumstances.
- You continue to receive support from external partners. This includes support from the Diocese of Lancaster, the local authority and a local English hub. Teachers and subject leaders have benefited from this support. The local authority continues to work alongside leaders to develop and improve curriculum plans. The diocese has provided support to ensure that members of the governing body are increasingly effective in their roles. The leaders' work with a local English hub has resulted in the introduction of a new reading curriculum in the autumn term 2020. This curriculum is helping to address the previous inconsistencies in the delivery of the phonics curriculum.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and teachers. We spoke with pupils and heard them read to a member of staff. We met with parents and carers, members of the governing body,

including the chair of governors, two representatives of the local authority and a representative of the diocese to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also examined minutes from governing body meetings and examples of the school's curriculum plans. We considered the 34 responses from Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.

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

Yours sincerely

John Donald
Her Majesty's Inspector