

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



19 February 2021

Tijhs Jordan  
Acting Headteacher  
Marnel Junior School  
Shetland Road  
Popley Way  
Basingstoke  
Hampshire  
RG24 9PT

Dear Mr Jordan

### **Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Marnel Junior School**

Following my remote inspection with Shazia Akram, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 3 and 4 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 have serious weaknesses.

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 have serious weaknesses at its previous section 5 inspection. 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.**

## Context

- Since the last inspection in February 2020, there have been several changes in staffing and governance. There is a new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). Several governors have changed and there is a new chair of the governing body. The school is due to join the Bourne Education Trust (BET) in April 2021.
- During autumn term 2020, a small proportion of pupils had to work from home for short periods. Some pupils in Years 3 and 6 had more than one period of self-isolation.
- In the week before this inspection, just under a fifth of pupils attended school on site, a proportion that has been increasing weekly. This includes approximately two thirds of vulnerable pupils and one third of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- A small number of staff are working from home as they have to shield. Their in-school duties are covered by colleagues.

## Main findings

- Leaders and governors have ensured that all pupils continue with their learning in all subjects during the current circumstances. Staff know pupils and their families really well. Staff have kept in close contact and provided families with technology to make sure that all pupils are able to access the lessons and resources while working from home. However, until very recently, leaders have focused on pupils' engagement with learning rather than checking how well pupils know and understand what they have been taught.
- Before the partial closure of schools in March 2020, leaders redesigned the subject plans for reading and mathematics. Over the next few months, leaders worked with the local authority to review planning in other subjects. This made it easier for leaders to adapt lessons and move to remote education. Leaders have changed the order of some activities in music, design and technology and art, so that pupils will be taught aspects that need specialist equipment when they all return to school.
- Teachers provide live online lessons for each year group. The vulnerable pupils and children of key workers who are in school access the same virtual lessons and materials as those pupils who are working from home. Leaders are in the process of refining this approach so that fewer pupils are in each video call. The intention is that this will help the teachers to know more accurately how well pupils are learning during each lesson.
- Leaders have prioritised the teaching of reading and phonics. All teachers and learning support assistants are now trained to teach phonics. Staff record phonics lessons and provide effective support for pupils who need help to catch up. Reading lessons have been adapted well for remote learning. All

pupils have digital reading books that are matched carefully to their reading stage. Staff listen to the weakest readers weekly. Other pupils record themselves reading and upload the files for their teachers. Leaders recognise this is onerous and are considering ways to improve this process.

- The SENCo has made well-considered use of the advice from the local special school. She has made sure that staff know how to help pupils with SEND to meet their personal learning targets as well as to develop their subject knowledge. Learning support assistants help teachers to adapt lessons to meet the needs of these pupils. The SENCo has encouraged pupils with SEND to attend on site. Where this is not possible, staff have worked closely with parents to make sure that they are confident to oversee the tasks that their children are set.
- Governors have benefited from training and support from the local authority. They adapted quickly to working remotely and continued their scrutiny of leaders' work. This has helped them to successfully hold leaders to account for decisions and to ensure that all pupils receive an education during the current circumstances.
- Hampshire local authority and BET multi-academy trust have provided effective support and challenge. They have helped leaders to improve provision and deal with the current circumstances. The local authority's work has included support for curriculum planning and SEND provision. These aspects now appear stronger than as described in the previous inspection report. The BET trust has supported school leadership and built partnerships with other local schools. This has strengthened subject leadership, particularly in English and mathematics. The trust has also reviewed the quality of remote learning for all pupils. Leaders know there is more work to be done to improve this.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, pupils, staff, the chair of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and a representative from BET multi-academy trust to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We listened to pupils read, looked at curriculum plans, lesson resources and pupils' work. We also took account of the 50 responses by parents to Ofsted's Parent View, including 22 written responses, and the 30 staff responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.

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

Yours sincerely  
Lucy English

**Her Majesty's Inspector**