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9 February 2021

Simon Millington  
Headteacher  
St James Church of England Junior School  
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Gloucestershire  
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Dear Mr Millington

**Additional, remote monitoring inspection of St James Church of England Junior School**

Following my remote inspection with Marie Thomas, 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 two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in January 2018.

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

- The headteacher and a teacher left the school at the end of the autumn term 2020. An interim executive headteacher started in post in January 2021. A new teacher started in January 2021. There have been four changes to personnel on the governing body.
- Approximately half of the pupils in the school learned remotely at some point during the autumn term 2020. For most pupils, this was for a very short time. A Year 5 class worked remotely for four days and the Year 6 class worked remotely for 10 days.
- Approximately 90% of all pupils are currently educated at home. Those attending school include about a quarter of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and approximately 10% of the vulnerable pupils at the school.
- No members of staff are currently absent due to COVID-19.

## Main findings

- During the autumn term 2020, school leaders and governors prepared for pupils to be able to learn at home. They ensured that staff knew how to deliver remote education. As a result, the majority of pupils, whether learning at home or in school, join online lessons each day.
- Since the previous inspection, improving the curriculum has been a priority for leaders. In September 2020, the school's new curriculum plan, with a focus on broadening pupils' vocabulary, was launched. Staff are now working on how they check what pupils have understood and remembered.
- Teachers adapt subjects such as art and music to suit learning at home. Pupils continue to learn the school's curriculum in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders intend to review learning plans to make sure that pupils catch up with important missed knowledge.
- Leaders check that pupils have the electronic devices they need to join in with remote learning. Staff make extra contact with vulnerable pupils. They supply learning resources to help pupils with their tasks at home. The school provides extra support for vulnerable pupils' learning.
- During the autumn term 2020, extra teaching helped pupils to recover missed learning. Leaders are now planning for more learning sessions for pupils who still need to catch up with phonics. There are online 'chatty' sessions for pupils who speak English as an additional language. Leaders organise help with learning for pupils when this is needed.

- Leaders told us that improving reading has, and continues to be, a priority for the school. Teachers use high-quality books to read stories with pupils during online reading sessions. Staff help pupils to enjoy reading and to want to read more.
- The special educational needs coordinator checks how pupils with SEND are managing their learning. Teaching assistants support the live online lessons and provide more help to pupils as needed. Speech and language therapists continue to work with the school to provide extra help. Leaders are working to ensure that pupils with SEND have the support they need, whether they are learning at home or in school.
- Governors have a solid understanding of the challenges that leaders are facing. They support leaders to overcome barriers so that pupils are able to learn. Governors work effectively to hold leaders to account for the education provided to pupils during the pandemic.
- A local authority improvement officer supports the school. She has continued her support throughout the pandemic. Leaders create positive partnerships with the local authority and with schools who offer support. Leaders, including governors, are resolute and determined to provide education for pupils during this challenging time.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We held meetings to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown. Meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the family support worker, teachers, teaching assistants and pupils. We also met with representatives of those responsible for governance and an improvement officer from the local authority.

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

Yours sincerely

Tonwen Empson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**