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24 February 2021

Jill Hine  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Hine

**Additional, remote monitoring inspection of St Margaret's Church of England Primary School**

Following my remote inspection with Laurie Anderson, 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 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 three successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in July 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

- Since the monitoring inspection in October 2019, two new leaders have joined the staff. The deputy headteacher took up post in March 2020 and the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator (SENCo) took up post in September 2020. There have been several changes of governors in the same period.
- Very few pupils had to be educated remotely during the autumn 2020 term.
- At the time of this inspection, about half of pupils were being educated on site. About two thirds of vulnerable pupils and a similar proportion of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) were attending school. The Nursery is open, but about a third of families are not sending their children at present.
- Leaders were not dealing with any staff absences relating to COVID-19 at the time of this inspection.

## Main findings

- Leaders were well placed to move to providing remote education in January 2021. They put plans in place during autumn 2020, building on their experience when schools were partially closed last summer term and considering carefully the approach to take and the online platform to use. Staff have had time to get used to the technology and are increasingly adept at finding new ways to use it to benefit pupils' learning. Leaders have ensured that almost all pupils learning from home have access to technology, and, if not, they provide activities by other means. The deputy headteacher has oversight of the consistency, quantity and quality of work provided and the progress that pupils are making.
- Communication with parents about learning is effective and, as a result, most pupils who are learning from home are engaging in learning and submitting work. Leaders and staff are appreciative of parents' support for children's learning. In turn, parents' comments to inspectors included: 'St Margaret's have handled this as well as possible' and 'the quality of work sent for them to do is fantastic and explained very well'.
- Prior to March 2020, leaders had started a rolling programme to improve the curriculum. This has been slowed somewhat by the events of the last year, so remains a work in progress. Nonetheless, across all year groups, leaders are making sure pupils are getting a broad learning diet in line with existing curriculum plans, whether they are learning at home or remotely.
- Improvements in teaching reading are being maintained. Whether in school or at home, the youngest pupils continue to get a daily phonics input, and staff still provide extra sessions for pupils at risk of falling behind in the early

stages of reading. All pupils are expected to read daily to their parents, and once a week to their teacher, using technology to record themselves.

- As far as is possible, pupils in the same class get similar learning activities and feedback whether they are in school or learning at home. Teachers set out clearly how much time pupils working remotely should spend learning each day to ensure that it is on a par with their classmates. Leaders follow up with families where that does not happen or where work is not at the same standard that pupils would produce in school. Each class comes together in a daily or, for the youngest children, weekly online 'meet'. In this virtual classroom, pupils get explanations and feedback from their teacher, as well as the opportunity to keep in touch with their friends and share what they are doing.
- Leaders have made sure that the majority of pupils with SEND are in school. Those in school continue to get their usual additional provision matched to their individual learning plans. The SENCo has oversight of how much pupils with SEND who are learning from home are doing and keeps in close contact with parents to support them. Staff are finding ways to adapt remote learning and to provide additional online support, for pupils with SEND, so that support and learning are matched to their individual needs, or by dropping off resources.
- Governors have made sure that systems are in place to offer education to all pupils at this time. They check with leaders that pupils have the technology to access remote learning, and they ask how many pupils are not only accessing but are engaging in the tasks set. However, as yet they are not holding leaders to account for the quality of the education provided in the current circumstances or the impact on pupils' learning.
- There was a change of local authority school improvement adviser (SIA) in October 2020. The new SIA provided useful support for leaders navigating their way through the operational challenges the pandemic presented during the autumn term. More recently, he has begun work to help them to further improve curriculum provision, but this support and challenge is still at an early stage.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other leaders, including the reading lead, class teachers, pupils, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also looked at examples of pupils' work and teachers' feedback to them, listened to some pupils read with an adult in school and observed short recordings of teachers and pupils at work. We took account of the views of 101 parents and 36

staff using Ofsted's online surveys and considered various school documents and policies relevant to the focus of this inspection.

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

Yours sincerely

Alison Bradley  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**