

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



23 February 2021

Ian Jones
Headteacher
St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School
Holcombe Drive
Burnley
Lancashire
BB10 4BH

Dear Mr Jones

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Amanda Stringer, 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. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in July 2019.

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, two new governors have been appointed. The number of pupils on the school's roll has reduced. There is now one class in each year group. The nursery provision at the school closed in September 2020.
- Across the autumn term 2020, around half of the pupils had to be educated remotely for short periods of time. Key stage 2 pupils were particularly affected due to repeated periods of self-isolation for several year groups.
- At the time of this inspection, approximately one third of pupils are being educated on site. Half of these are the most vulnerable pupils and one third are pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Currently, leaders are not dealing with any significant staffing issues.

Main findings

- Leaders have focused on improving the curriculum since the last inspection. At the start of the pandemic, subject leaders had revised the curriculum plans to set out what pupils should learn in each year group. Since the pandemic took hold, subject leaders have been reviewing the content of their subjects from early years to Year 6. As a result, teachers are able to check that pupils are knowing more and remembering more in all subjects.
- Subject leaders are currently evaluating the curriculum plans to check that pupils build their knowledge from year to year. Some subjects are further on with this action than others. This is due to the staffing issues in the autumn term and the difficulties that staff have faced in being able to meet and develop the curriculum plans. Both of these factors are a direct result of the pandemic.
- In the current circumstances, leaders are adapting the plans for the subjects that they lead so that the curriculum can be taught remotely. This is ensuring that pupils are taught the most important knowledge in the correct order. Pupils who are working at home continue to learn the same things as those in school.
- There is a coherent approach to providing remote education for pupils. Teachers check which pieces of work pupils complete and which recorded sessions they access. They also provide feedback to pupils. Parents and carers contribute to this process. Many parents upload comments about learning and videos of completed learning activities. This is supporting teachers to find out what pupils know and can do.
- Staff are making sure that younger pupils in school, and those at home, continue with their phonics lessons every day. This is also the case for pupils

in key stage 2 who are still at the early stages of reading. As a result of having to deliver phonics remotely, leaders have adapted the way that reading is taught. They have also invested in new reading books. Teachers record demonstration videos to help pupils learn the sounds that letters represent. This ensures that pupils who work in school or at home are not falling behind in their phonic knowledge. Pupils are able to continue their reading practise because they are given books that match their reading ability. As a result, there is a consistent approach to the teaching of reading in the current circumstances.

- Vulnerable pupils who are working at home have extra support to meet their individual needs. For example, you have made sure that they have the equipment that allows them to access learning remotely. Leaders also work with other agencies to support vulnerable pupils and their families. This means that the most vulnerable pupils are being supported with their education and emotional well-being during these testing times.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) continues to work in partnership with other agencies. The SENCo also works closely with staff. Together they have completed risk assessments and adapted personalised plans to support these pupils whether they are working in school or at home. This means that pupils with SEND continue to receive an education regardless of where their learning takes place.
- Governors are checking leaders' actions in the current circumstances. Leaders and governors work together to ensure that a curriculum is in place for all pupils. Governors have taken steps to assure themselves that the education pupils currently receive in school, and at home, is appropriate.
- The local authority has taken actions to support leaders and staff. Training has been provided for governors, subject leaders and teachers. This has had a positive impact on developing staff's subject knowledge. It has also helped them to understand how to carry out their roles effectively. Local authority officers regularly review the work of leaders and governors, offering support where necessary.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, other senior leaders, staff, five members of the governing body and two representatives of the local authority.

Inspectors examined the school's curriculum plans and reviewed documents relating to governance. Inspectors also observed pupils reading and talked to some pupils in key stage 2 about their current experiences in school.

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

Yours sincerely

Simon Hunter
Her Majesty's Inspector