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8 March 2021

Chris Read  
Interim Headteacher  
The Bishop's Church of England Primary Academy  
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Norfolk  
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Dear Mr Read

**Additional, remote monitoring inspection of The Bishop's Church of England Primary Academy**

Following my remote inspection with David Milligan, 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 October 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.**

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

- ensure that assessment systems give teachers the information they need about pupils' learning, including when pupils are working remotely
- monitor effectively the impact the implementation of the curriculum has on pupils' understanding.

### **Context**

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has left the school. You were appointed by The Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust (the trust) as interim headteacher in February 2020. The vice-chair of the local governing body became chair in January 2021.
- Approximately 12% of pupils received education remotely at some point during the autumn term of 2020. This affected a greater proportion of children in Nursery and Reception than other year groups.
- At the time of the inspection, 27% of pupils were being educated in school. All pupils with education, health and care plans, 28% of all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and 71% of vulnerable pupils were being educated in school.

### **Main findings**

- Following the previous inspection, you reviewed curriculum plans in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. You provided training for teachers in how to improve the teaching of English and arranged to do the same for mathematics. The third national lockdown has delayed you in seeing these plans through to fruition. You intend to continue with them when all pupils return to school.
- Your first priority in January 2021 was to ensure that pupils who were not in school took part in education. Teachers routinely check that these pupils have completed the work set. Staff contact the families of those who have not. Almost all pupils who are not in school now take part in education. This is a marked improvement since the start of the third lockdown.
- You have ensured that pupils at home study the same subject content as those in school. This is usually the same content teachers had planned to teach them if the pandemic had not struck. In the early years, teachers have found it difficult to provide some aspects of the usual curriculum, particularly in the creative and practical aspects of learning.
- You have high aspirations for early readers. You have adapted your approach so that all pupils are continuing to learn phonics at the present time. Pupils at home benefit from resources which are directly aligned to the teaching in

school. The books pupils read are closely matched to the sounds they learn. Staff quickly assess when pupils in school fall behind. They work swiftly to help them catch up. Pupils at home who normally get extra help in school now receive this though, for example, telephone calls from teaching assistants.

- You continue to provide additional support to pupils with SEND. The work teachers set is adapted to meet pupils' needs. Teachers contact the parents of pupils working at home to guide them on how to support their children's learning. Pupils at home get help from teaching assistants and professional services remotely.
- Pupils in school benefit from the help of teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils at home are mostly educated by completing work and watching recorded lesson content. Teachers do not have a common approach to checking the quality of the work pupils complete at home. These pupils do not receive the same level of guidance as pupils in school.
- Your systems to check the quality of education do not work well at the present time. Leaders currently check what work teachers set for pupils, but not whether pupils learn from this.
- The trust uses effective ways to check standards at the school. The 'academy improvement group' and the academy group executive principal closely monitor leaders' actions. They challenge and support you, including with provision at the current time. The local governing body provides additional monitoring. Aspects of its work have been hampered by the pandemic. The information governors receive from leaders, for example, does not tell them how well pupils are learning at the moment.
- The trust provides helpful support to the academy. You lead actions to improve the school, as well as its day-to-day work to provide education during the pandemic. The trust's 'curriculum champions' programme has helped develop ways of delivering education remotely. The trust has provided support to the school in interpreting and implementing government guidance throughout the pandemic. It has secured help from other organisations in longer term developments, such as in how reading is taught.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We held meetings with the interim headteacher, other senior leaders, leaders of the trust and those responsible for governance to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We spoke with staff and pupils, listened to pupils read, looked at pupils' work and saw a small sample of the education pupils receive. We reviewed minutes of

meetings of the local governing body and the academy improvement group, and notes of visits from the academy group executive principal.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of The Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Norwich, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Norfolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Hemmings  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**