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Suzie Ottewell
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Dear Mrs Ottewell

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Old Priory Junior Academy

Following my remote inspection with Dale Burr, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 23 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 two successive judgements of requires improvement. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in September 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:

- plan a French curriculum that is as well sequenced as other curriculum subjects, such as history and science.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, a special educational needs coordinator has joined the school and a new geography lead was appointed. The governing body of Old Priory Junior Academy amalgamated with the governing body of Plympton St Mary Church of England Infant School to form one governing body.
- In the autumn term 2020, approximately 22% of pupils experienced a period of remote learning.
- At the time of this inspection, around 30% of pupils were being educated on site. Seventy-six per cent of vulnerable pupils and 55% of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) were attending school.

Main findings

- Since the last inspection, you and your staff have worked hard to develop the curriculum. Despite the challenges of the last year, you have ensured that all pupils receive an effective education. You have made sure that pupils access the same curriculum, remotely and at school.
- You have rightly prioritised reading. Teachers read novels daily to pupils both remotely and on site, alongside listening to pupils read. This enriches pupils' appreciation of texts and develops their understanding of themes, characters and settings. Consequently, they enjoy reading and discussing texts.
- You have sequenced writing lessons well. Pupils are secure in their use of audience, purpose and text type when crafting their writing. Pupils are enthusiastic about writing.
- You have ensured that pupils are secure in their mathematical knowledge before they move on in their learning. Pupils regularly practise reasoning and problem-solving, as some pupils are not confident in these areas.
- Both at home and at school, pupils successfully develop the scientific skills of hypothesising, experimentation and evaluation. However, you acknowledge that some of the wider curriculum requires more time to be fully established across the school.
- You have rightly identified that the French curriculum is not as well constructed compared to other subjects. As a result, pupils do not build their

knowledge of grammar and vocabulary effectively and are not well prepared for studying French at secondary school.

- Most pupils with SEND attend school. Pupils both at home and in school receive tailored support which enables them to make progress in their learning. Staff check regularly on their well-being.
- The majority of vulnerable pupils and key workers' children attend school. You monitor pupils' engagement closely and address any concerns swiftly. Therefore, pupils' engagement with the curriculum is strong.
- Governors monitor regularly the quality of remote and on-site education through virtual visits and meetings with a range of leaders and staff. Governors ask challenging questions and hold leaders to account for their changes to the curriculum.
- Leaders draw effectively on the support of the trust, a local school and an external English adviser. They value the level of guidance and challenge they receive. The support which leaders receive from subject networks has been invaluable in constructing a well-sequenced curriculum.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, curriculum leaders, pupils, three members of the local governing body, the director of school improvement and the chief executive officer at the St Christopher multi-academy trust to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We listened to pupils read and looked at curriculum plans, lesson resources, local governing body minutes and pupils' work. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including 51 free-text responses, and 13 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the St Christopher multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Plymouth. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Susan Aykin
Her Majesty's Inspector