

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



15 March 2021

Matthew White  
Executive Headteacher  
St Ambrose Catholic Primary School  
Alderfield Drive  
Speke  
Liverpool  
Merseyside  
L24 7SF

Dear Mr White

### **Additional, remote monitoring inspection of St Ambrose Catholic Primary School**

Following my remote inspection with Claire Cropper, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 10 and 11 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 special measures.

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 require special measures at its previous section 5 inspection. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in March 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

- You, the deputy headteacher and all governors all joined the school after the last inspection.
- Approximately one fifth of pupils were educated at home for short periods of time during the autumn term 2020.
- At the time of this inspection, half of all the pupils were being educated at home and half on site. Seven out of eight vulnerable pupils were being educated on site. Three quarters of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) were attending the school.
- A small proportion of staff are currently absent due to COVID-19. Leaders are temporarily using staff from the wider staff team or supply agency staff to cover these absences.

## Main findings

- You, other leaders and governors used the time since March 2020 well to think carefully about what you wanted pupils to learn at St Ambrose. You worked with teachers to develop an ambitious, well-structured curriculum for all pupils. This means that you were in a confident position to provide all pupils with a suitable education as we entered the third lockdown.
- You ensure that pupils at home and at school study all the subjects in the primary curriculum and that they are learning effectively. Teaching staff plan subject activities which cover the knowledge pupils need to learn and remember. This helps pupils to build and link their knowledge across subjects in an orderly manner. For example, pupils have a better understanding of how to solve problems because it is a key feature of the improved curriculum that is currently being taught.
- In the autumn of 2020, you made sure that staff, pupils, parents and carers knew how to use the systems you have in place for online learning. Pupils use these systems regularly and confidently as part of their learning at home. Staff are skilled in delivering the curriculum remotely. They carefully check on pupils' learning and use this information effectively to plan further learning for pupils.
- You ensure that pupils at home complete the same work as pupils at school. Pupils, including vulnerable pupils, receive regular extra support if they need help to understand the tasks teachers have set them.
- You make certain that reading remains an important matter for all staff at the school. This means that pupils, including vulnerable pupils, are learning letter sounds matched to their existing knowledge of phonics. Pupils use their improved knowledge to read words with fluency and accuracy. Pupils' learning

at home continues to develop their phonic knowledge because teachers provide them with videos to help them practise the phonics that they know. Teachers encourage families to share videos of pupils saying the letter sounds learned at home, which teachers use to assess what pupils need to learn next. Teachers and teaching assistants teach phonics accurately to pupils who are attending the school.

- Parents praise the quality of learning that teachers have set for their children at home in recent months. They said that staff helpfully provide guidance for pupils and their families to complete tasks at home.
- You follow closely your ambitious plans to improve the education of pupils with SEND. You make sure that the coordinator for SEND has enough time to review teachers' work to support pupils' learning. As a result, these pupils are learning successfully at home and in school. Parents of pupils with SEND said that staff give them valuable guidance to support their children's learning.
- Governors are well informed about the curriculum. They talked knowledgeably about the subject content pupils learn. Governors' checks on the work of the school include purposeful discussions with subject leaders. They challenge senior leaders on the decisions they make, and the action they take, including about support for vulnerable pupils.
- You have used the support of experts from outside of the school well to help improve the work of leaders and staff. The school is now less dependent on outside help. The local authority and archdiocese have ensured a turnaround in the quality of governance at the school. The local authority has helped leaders to improve the curriculum and to deepen staff subject knowledge, for instance in early reading. You and staff share the positive improvements at St Ambrose with other schools.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke with you, groups of pupils from Year 1 and Year 6, several staff, some parents, representatives of those responsible for governance, a representative of the local authority and a representative of the Archdiocese of Liverpool to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also checked examples of work set by teachers for pupils to complete at home and video recordings, including phonics lessons and staff reading stories. We considered examples of pupils' work submitted to the school on the internet. We looked at 24 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. There were no free-text responses to the survey. We reviewed responses from 15 staff to the Ofsted questionnaire. We checked some school documents, including minutes of meetings by the governing body.

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

Yours sincerely

Tim Vaughan  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**