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Chris Heyes
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Dear Mr Heyes

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of St Anne's Church of England Academy

Following my remote inspection with John Donald, 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.

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 November 2017.

Having considered all the evidence and taking into account the impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus) 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 staff successfully help pupils who are the weakest readers to build the basic knowledge and skills that they need to read effectively.

Context

- Since the last monitoring inspection, you were appointed as headteacher. There have been other fundamental changes to the school's leadership. Most members of the senior leadership team and some middle leaders have joined the school. Some governors have resigned, and a new chair and a vice-chair of the governing body have been appointed.
- In the same period, seven teachers have left the school and eight have joined.
- You have established a close link with the Cranmer Educational Trust (CET). The school will become part of this multi-academy trust on 1 March 2021.
- Across the autumn term 2020, roughly four fifths of pupils spent some time being educated remotely.
- At the time of this inspection, over four fifths of pupils were being educated at home. The pupils being educated on site included about three fifths of vulnerable pupils and two fifths of pupils with an education, health and care plan.

Main findings

- You and other leaders have a clear purpose and high expectations. You believe that pupils can, and should, succeed. You and the staff are determined to make sure that this happens. Leaders and governors have adapted the school's approaches to teaching the curriculum effectively so that pupils could continue their learning during the pandemic.
- You and other senior leaders have thought carefully about the knowledge you want pupils to learn. This has led to a well-sequenced curriculum. Middle leaders have re-planned the learning in their subjects. The new plans outline how pupils will build up their knowledge in a structured and sensible way.
- Teachers make sure that pupils follow the planned curriculum as closely as possible, whether they learn at home or in school. Pupils' knowledge continues to grow. Teachers deliver lessons in all subjects to pupils working in school. These lessons are streamed live to pupils working at home. Any pupils who cannot access these lessons are able to watch the recorded version later.

Teachers have adapted the way they teach some practical activities. Once pupils have returned to school, teachers intend to provide additional opportunities for them to catch up on practical work.

- You and other senior leaders identified which pupils would be best served by receiving their education in school. Pupils told us that they find learning in school easier because they can get help from a teacher quickly. Systems are in place for teachers to check whether pupils working at home are taking part in learning. If pupils are not engaging with their work, teachers contact their parents and carers to offer support and guidance.
- Pupils in Year 11 have one more lesson each day than pupils in other year groups. This system has been in place for the whole school year. It is helping pupils to boost any weaker areas of their knowledge, which now include weaknesses following disruption caused by the pandemic. The additional lessons have continued during the current lockdown. Similarly, staff have ensured that support for pupils in Year 11 who are preparing to move to college at the end of this year has continued, even though many are working at home.
- You and other leaders have provided training for teachers about how they can make sure that pupils can use reading to help their learning. However, this work is recent and does not focus sufficiently on identifying and addressing gaps in the phonic knowledge of the weakest readers.
- The leaders of the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) share information with teachers about the best ways they can help such pupils learn. This has included helpful advice about how to best support pupils with SEND who are working at home. As well as supporting the learning of pupils with SEND, staff check that pupils engage with the work set, whether in school or at home. If any pupils are unable to take part as they should, leaders seek further support from agencies outside the school.
- Governors understand the school's work in detail. They focus on the right things to improve. Governors use their knowledge to provide clear support and challenge to you and other senior leaders. There is a well-established link between the governing body and the CET. This link provides a stable foundation for the school as it joins the CET.
- You and other leaders received significant levels of support from other professionals. For example, subject leaders from other schools coached middle leaders as they developed the curriculum. This external support has recently reduced. You have started to share examples of effective practice at St. Anne's with teachers from other schools.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you and other senior leaders; groups of subject leaders, teachers and pupils; a consultant who provides support to the school; the chair and vice-chair of the governing body; and the chief executive officer of the CET, who is also a governor, to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also reviewed documents including minutes of meetings of the governing body and information about the education currently being provided by the school. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including nine free-text responses, and 60 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the CET, the director of education for the Diocese of Manchester, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Rochdale Borough Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

David Selby
Her Majesty's Inspector