

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



19 March 2021

Daniel Sumner
Headteacher
Calow Church of England VC Primary School
North Road
Calow
Chesterfield
S44 5BD

Dear Mr Sumner

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Calow Church of England VC Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Andrew Wright, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 4 March 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 three 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:

- ensure that the developments in English and mathematics are replicated in the foundation subjects, including checks on pupils' learning.

Context

- There have been no major changes in staffing since the last inspection. Currently, the coordinator for English is on maternity leave. Her role is being fulfilled by you. There is a new chair of the governing body. Three other governors are also new to the role.
- During the autumn term 2020, approximately one half of pupils had to self-isolate for at least one day, during which time they were educated remotely.
- Around four in ten pupils are currently receiving remote education at home. Most vulnerable pupils and about half of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are being educated on site.

Main findings

- When the school partially closed in March 2020, you had begun to make necessary changes to the curriculum. You continue to make this a priority.
- You have sharpened your understanding of the school's priorities, with support of governors and the local authority. Subject leaders have improved curriculum plans, which enable teachers to identify more precisely what important knowledge they want pupils to learn. Staff make sure that pupils revisit what they have learned previously. You have put in place detailed checks on pupils' learning in English and mathematics, including for those pupils learning at home. Such checks are still in development in other subjects.
- You and your leaders have used well the lessons you learned from the first national lockdown. Your work to strengthen pupils' remote learning is paying dividends. Staff are using a wide range of methods to deliver remote education. This includes recorded and live teaching, workbooks, digital packages and websites. You have listened to the experiences of parents and pupils. Staff are using this information to adjust and improve the work they give.
- The teaching of reading is a priority for you and staff. Staff make sure that pupils, including vulnerable pupils, learn phonics daily. This is true for pupils who work in school and those who are learning at home. Leaders match books carefully to pupils' phonics knowledge. These books help pupils practise the sounds they are learning. Leaders identify who needs extra help to improve their reading so that teachers can then provide additional support.

- Leaders know how important it is to remove barriers to the learning of pupils with SEND. Teachers encourage vulnerable pupils and those with SEND to attend on site whenever possible. They frequently monitor those who work remotely. Staff make regular contact with families. They provide thoughtful and often personalised support to parents to help their children.
- Governors are knowledgeable and well informed about the progress the school is making. They check what action you and other leaders are taking to provide education during the restrictions. They are mindful of your well-being and that of your staff. Governors meet remotely with you and subject leaders regularly to ask pertinent questions about the knowledge that pupils will learn through the curriculum. Consequently, governors challenge leaders to continue to push ahead on improving the school's curriculum.
- The local authority provides a range of challenge and support. This ensures that the school's curriculum continues to be developed. You work with a national leader of education from another school and several external subject specialists. This has helped you to put systems in place to review the progress that you are making to improve the curriculum.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, pupils, representatives of those responsible for governance and a representative of the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also reviewed a selection of recorded lessons and pupils' work. We remotely observed some pupils reading to a member of staff. We looked at 17 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 58 free-text responses, and 22 staff questionnaires.

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

Yours sincerely

Phil Garnham
Her Majesty's Inspector