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David Sidaway
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Sidaway

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Saint Augustine Webster Catholic Voluntary Academy

Following my remote inspection with Matthew Knox, 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 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 March 2020.

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 an agreed and consistent approach to phonics and early reading is fully embedded
- deepen teachers' knowledge and curriculum leaders' expertise in subjects across the wider curriculum, such as music and computing
- ensure that leaders' checks on what pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) know, remember and can do, are more meticulous.

Context

- There have been significant staffing changes. You became headteacher in September 2020. The deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, early years leader and special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), are new to post since the previous inspection. Several support staff have left, and others appointed. The chair of governors left, and a new chair has been appointed.
- Due to a significant COVID-19 outbreak among staff, parents and pupils, most pupils had to be educated remotely across the autumn term 2020. Children in the early years and Year 1 pupils were affected more than others due to repeated periods of isolation.
- At the time of this inspection, half of pupils are being educated on site and half are learning from home. Almost all vulnerable pupils and pupils with education, health and care plans are attending on site. Approximately half of those pupils with SEND who require additional support are in school.

Main findings

- Education has been provided for all pupils throughout the period of restrictions. You have prioritised the needs of vulnerable pupils, children of key workers and pupils with SEND. Leaders work closely with external agencies such as social work colleagues and the police to meet the needs of pupils and families where needed.
- Pupils learning from home have access to recorded teaching sessions and a range of online learning resources, including the government's 'Oak Academy'. They meet teachers 'live' online, regularly. Paper-based packs of work are available. You have delivered electronic devices and supported families with internet access, where needed, to ensure that learning can take place. Pupils in school follow the same curriculum as those learning from home. One parent commented, 'I am very happy with the education my children are receiving online and in school during this difficult time. The staff are doing an excellent job.'

- In March 2020, inspectors challenged leaders and governors to develop greater expertise in subject leadership and establish a well-sequenced curriculum in subjects beyond English and mathematics. Work was hampered by COVID-19 restrictions and significant staffing changes. You are further on in some subjects than others. In mathematics, for example, leaders have ensured that staff know what to teach and when to teach it. However, the most important content and knowledge in other subjects, such as music and computing, are not so well defined or sequenced. Not all teachers are secure in their subject expertise. Not all subject leaders are confident to lead, monitor and plan their subjects from the early years onwards.
- You are tackling matters of the curriculum and subject leadership. Your senior leadership team has drawn on advice and expertise from external partners, including the English Hub, the local authority, the diocese and the multi-academy trust. For example, you requested a review of safeguarding and SEND. You have used the findings of each to develop and shape provision. Your leadership team and staff welcome this challenge and support and the training opportunities afforded. Senior leaders' confidence to identify and tackle the correct priorities is developing apace due to such collaboration.
- Leaders understand the importance of early reading for pupils' later success. You have established a school library to promote a love of reading. Staff training is developing greater expertise among adults. Daily reading and phonics sessions take place for all pupils and children, whether in school or at home. Pupils who need extra practice and support get it. Pupils learning from home can read decodable books online that are linked to their phonics' knowledge. However, further work is needed. Staff use a mix of books from different publishers to teach early reading and phonics. This makes the approach to teaching phonics and early reading imprecise. It also makes the close matching of books to pupils' phonics knowledge trickier than it needs to be.
- The SENCo works with external agencies, such as speech and language therapists and the educational psychologist, to make sure that pupils with SEND are supported. There is frequent communication with parents. Pupils' learning plans and targets are checked regularly. However, leaders' checks on what pupils with SEND know, remember and can do, are imprecise.
- Governors visit school to check matters for themselves, either virtually or in person where restrictions allow. They meet with staff and receive reports from leaders, such as those with responsibilities for SEND and safeguarding. In this way, governors are starting to challenge leaders and hold them accountable for the education that is being provided.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, the multi-academy trust chief executive officer, pupils, staff, 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 made 'visits' to lessons and discussed matters of child protection with two designated leaders for safeguarding. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 25 free-text responses, and 29 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the St Therese of Lisieux Catholic multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Nottingham, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for North Lincolnshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Fiona Manuel
Her Majesty's Inspector