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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
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18 March 2021

Tina Connell  
Headteacher  
English Martyrs Catholic Primary School  
Dewsbury Road  
Wakefield  
West Yorkshire  
WF2 9DD

Dear Mrs Connell

**Additional, remote monitoring inspection of English Martyrs Catholic Primary School**

Following my remote inspection with Paul Tomkow, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 25 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 January 2020.

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:

- implement curriculum plans for subjects in the wider curriculum that are well sequenced and consistently identify the key knowledge that pupils will learn, from early years to Year 6.

### **Context**

- Since the last inspection, new leaders have joined the school. These include a special educational needs coordinator, an early years leader and a key stage 1 leader. Additionally, a new interim deputy headteacher and a chair of the rapid improvement group (RIG) have taken up their posts.
- During the autumn term 2020, almost a third of pupils had to learn from home for a short period of time.
- At the time of this inspection, less than half of the pupils were being educated on site. This included most of the pupils with an education, health and care plan and the school's most vulnerable pupils.

### **Main findings**

- You, other leaders and teachers have spent your time wisely since the start of the pandemic. When the school partially closed in March 2020, you were in the process of reviewing and restructuring the curriculum. You continue to make this one of your top priorities. Since the first lockdown, the school's remote education offer has evolved. You, staff and governors were well prepared to provide all pupils, including vulnerable pupils, with an effective education either in school or remotely during the spring term 2021.
- Staff have accessed a variety of training to develop their subject knowledge and leadership skills. They have received some training in most curriculum subjects. This has helped them to become more skilled in delivering a wider range of subject curriculums. Some staff have also had training to develop their subject leadership roles. They are now more confident and competent in leading their areas of responsibility.
- You and subject leaders have revised curriculum plans across all national curriculum subjects. However, there is more to do in some subjects to make sure these plans promote pupils' learning from the early years to Year 6. In some subjects, such as geography and design technology, the key knowledge that teachers want pupils to learn is not identified clearly enough. In addition, the order in which knowledge is to be taught is not always apparent.
- Pupils across the school, including vulnerable pupils, are studying all curriculum subjects, whether learning at home or in school. Teachers have adapted some aspects of the curriculum so that subjects such as science and music can be taught in school and remotely. For example, in science, teachers

are focusing on teaching key scientific knowledge. They will resume teaching scientific investigations when all pupils return to school.

- You and other leaders ensure that all pupils, including vulnerable pupils, learning from home have access to suitable devices. This has led to high levels of engagement in remote education. Parents and carers are very satisfied with the school's remote education offer. Staff provide parents with detailed guidance on how to support their children's learning at home. This allows parents to take an active part in their children's learning. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. This gives teachers an understanding of what pupils know and allows them to plan future learning.
- Pupils at home or in school access the same commercial phonics programme. This helps to maintain consistency in the way that phonics is taught. All pupils access live and pre-recorded phonics lessons. Younger pupils, including early years, have access to books that are closely matched to the sounds they have learned. Such effective practice helps to develop pupils' love of reading and consolidates their phonics knowledge. Pupils at the early stage of reading in key stage 2 also have access to the school's phonics programme to help them become more proficient readers. Any pupil who is falling behind in their reading skills is given targeted support to help them catch up quickly.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported effectively at home and in school. Learning is broken down into smaller chunks for pupils to grasp more easily, and teachers provide specialist resources so that pupils can access the curriculum at home. You and other leaders work closely with other agencies to ensure that pupils in school and at home continue to access the support they need. Staff keep in regular contact with pupils and parents, offering educational and emotional support.
- Leaders from the multi-academy trust (MAT) have supported you and other leaders well, for example with staffing issues and in developing the school's remote education offer. They have engaged the services of a local authority adviser to enhance the quality of education further.
- Members of the RIG have a clear oversight of the school and a secure understanding of the impact that the pandemic has had on staff, pupils and their families. They know what the school does well and what needs to improve. They are very supportive of you and school staff but are confident to challenge you on the action you take to improve the school.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, senior leaders, teachers, members of the RIG, members of the board of trustees of the academy trust and with a representative of the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also examined a wide range of documentation, including examples of the school's curriculum plans. We spoke with pupils and listened to them read with a member of staff. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 12 free-text responses, and 26 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the RIG, the chief executive officer of the Bishop Konstant Catholic Academy Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Wakefield. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Iwaskow  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**