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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mr Neil Harris
Headteacher
St Mary's Catholic Primary School (Maltby)
Muglet Lane
Maltby
South Yorkshire
S66 7JU

Dear Mr Harris

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School (Maltby)

Following my remote inspection with Sarah Hubbard, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on Friday 26 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 special measures.

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

- develop the curriculum, ensuring that it is well sequenced across all subjects and that staff are fully trained in its delivery.
- question leaders with greater depth and be less reliant on leaders' initial assertions.

Context

- Since the last inspection in February 2020, there have been a significant number of departures and appointments of key staff, including a number of resignations from the school's governing body.
- Across the autumn term 2020, around half of pupils had to be educated remotely. Pupils in Year 3 were affected more than others due to a period of whole class isolation.
- At the time of this inspection, the majority of pupils were being educated remotely. One quarter of vulnerable pupils and the same proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans (EHCP) were being educated on site.

Main findings

- Leaders are taking action to provide education in the current circumstances. Leaders and governors have used their experiences of the first national lockdown to refine their approach to the current offer. They have been thoughtful of the needs of the community in ensuring access for all. Leaders are monitoring pupils' engagement and acting promptly when greater support or encouragement is required. As a result, pupils' engagement is high.
- By March 2020, leaders had made progress with their plans in English and mathematics. Leaders had also continued to develop their early reading offer. In English and mathematics, leaders have re-ordered content and prioritised the knowledge that some pupils may have missed when schools were only open to some pupils due to COVID-19 restrictions last year.
- Leaders have completed a full review of the curriculum. Some subjects, such as modern foreign languages and design technology, are less well developed than others. This means that the remote curriculum in these subjects is not as refined. When developing the curriculum, leaders must ensure that staff are fully equipped to implement the curriculum effectively and with confidence.
- In the current circumstances, leaders are taking effective action to provide an education for vulnerable pupils and the children of key workers in school and for those pupils being educated remotely. Leaders are working hard to ensure every child in the school learns to read. They have focussed on those who struggle with reading and have made certain that these pupils receive specific

support that is designed to ensure pupils acquire phonetic knowledge quickly.

- HMI scrutiny of leaders on site and remote education plans for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) show where it is on site and teachers continue to offer bespoke, face to face support. Where it is remote, additional help is provided through pre-recorded videos, supplementary resources and regular conversations between the teachers and parents.
- The governing body have regrouped, acted with transparency and are carrying out their duties more efficiently than was the case previously. Governors know the school well. The minutes of their meetings show some evidence of scrutiny and challenge to leaders. Governors recognise that they must question leaders with greater depth and be less reliant on leaders' initial assertions.
- Leaders have links with external partners, including those from the diocese and local authority. They have used this external support to help them make necessary improvements in the teaching of English and mathematics and in the development of early years practice.

Evidence

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

We also observed two pre-recorded sessions of Reception children and Year 6 pupils. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 39 free-text responses, and 26 staff questionnaires.

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

Yours sincerely

Marcus Newby
Her Majesty's Inspector