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7 April 2021

Claire Prynne
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Dear Mrs Prynne

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of St Peter's Church of England Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Dale Burr, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 16 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.

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 October 2018.

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:

- build on improvements to subject leadership so that leaders consistently check the impact they are having across the whole curriculum
- improve long term curriculum planning so that learning is sequenced systematically in all subjects
- improve the leadership of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), so that teachers are supported to consistently plan provision that meets the individual needs of pupils.

Context

- Since the last inspection, you have been seconded from St Christopher's Multi Academy Trust (MAT) to be acting headteacher. You took up the role at the beginning of January 2021, alongside two new teachers. One of the new teachers is the subject leader for English. A new chair of governors is in post. The acting deputy headteacher left at the end of the Autumn term 2020. Governors have taken the decision for the school to join St Christopher's MAT. Plans are in place for the school to join the MAT on 1 April 2021.
- Approximately, one third of pupils were educated at home when the school was closed to most pupils at the start of the spring term. Nine tenths of vulnerable pupils and all pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan were educated on site at this time.

Main findings

- You have very high expectations. You have acted decisively and quickly by improving the teaching of reading and writing. At the same time, you have appropriately prioritised providing for pupils' personal development and well-being following instability caused by the pandemic. Staff recognise the clear direction you are providing. Everyone is working collectively to improve pupils' education in the current circumstances.
- Your work on improving subject leadership is beginning to show results. Together with trust leaders, you have provided useful training for those responsible for leading English and mathematics. As a result, English and mathematics leaders are taking greater responsibility for teaching and learning. For example, you and the new leader of English have supported teachers to deliver carefully sequenced programmes when teaching reading and writing.
- Other subject leaders are earlier in their development journey. This means that curriculum planning is not in a logical order in subjects like geography, history and music. Pupils are finding it harder to learn and remember more in these subjects.

- You have improved education for pupils when they need to learn at home. You have secured laptops for those who need them. When necessary, pupils access the same work at home as those who are in school.
- You are particularly keen to ensure that staff meet pupils' emotional needs with greater consistency. You believe this will help improve pupils' behaviour. However, disruption caused by the pandemic has made it difficult for you to establish your new higher expectations.
- You are working closely with the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) to implement considered plans for vulnerable pupils and those with SEND now that all pupils are back at school. You have introduced better systems and processes to assess and plan for pupils' individual needs. This is most noticeable in early reading which is your main priority. Together with the leads of English and phonics, you have rapidly secured training for staff in the effective teaching of phonics. Pupils have been carefully assessed. Pupils at risk of falling behind receive more timely support to help them catch up. The legacy of weaker practice means many pupils have much to catch up with.
- Generally, staff feel happier since your arrival. For example, subject leaders assert that you have enabled them to be more effective in their roles. Some staff are less assured. They have found regular and ongoing changes to be unsettling. Some believe that the management of behaviour is not yet secure. Similarly, most parents that responded to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, show concern about some of the changes you have made. Due to the pandemic, it has been difficult for you to meet parents to explain why you are making the much-needed changes.
- Governance arrangements are strengthening. Governors sensibly entered a 'management partnership' with the incoming trust. This has enabled them to provide a more forceful level of challenge and support to leaders. For example, governors, currently, receive useful and detailed reports from you. The 'steering group', made up of trust leaders and governors, has helped develop governors' questioning. Consequently, leaders focus on improving the right things, in the right order and in the right way.
- You and other leaders have made very good use of external support. Trust leaders have identified precisely, in sharp and insightful visit reports, where you need challenge and training. When necessary, the trust has supported the school to take effective action to challenge weak practice. As a result, education is improving at an increasing pace.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, the director of school improvement from St Christopher's MAT, subject leaders, the SENCo and two

representatives from the governing body to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also met with a group of pupils and heard some pupils read. We scrutinised curriculum planning, improvement planning and examples of work set for pupils when working from home. We analysed reports provided by trust leaders following visits to the school and minutes from the management partnership steering group. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including seven free-text responses, and 16 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer of the St Christopher's Multi Academy Trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Exeter, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Plymouth. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Barnes
Her Majesty's Inspector