

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



31 March 2021

Jenny Venning
Headteacher
St John and St Francis Church School
Westonzoyland Road
Bridgwater
Somerset
TA6 5BP

Dear Mrs Venning

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of St John and St Francis Church School

Following my remote inspection with Julie Carrington, 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 three successive judgements of requires improvement. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in November 2019.

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:

- continue assuring themselves of the quality of education in every subject to get the best for pupils across the full curriculum.

Context

- There have been few changes to staffing and governance since the previous inspection. Two teachers have returned from leave, while two new governors have recently been appointed to the governing body.
- Approximately, two thirds of pupils were educated at home when the school was closed to most pupils at the start of the spring term. Almost all pupils identified as being vulnerable were attending on site at this time.
- At the time of this inspection, the vast majority of pupils are being educated back at school. There are a few pupils who are continuing their education remotely while they are required to complete periods of self-isolation.

Main findings

- You and other leaders, including governors, are taking the necessary actions to provide education in the current circumstances. You have ensured that there has been a 'warm and ready' welcome for pupils who have recently returned.
- Leaders have taken effective action to develop the school's curriculum, despite the interruptions caused by COVID-19. Curriculum leaders know their subjects well. As a result, most subjects are carefully planned and set out what pupils are expected to learn, from the Reception Year to Year 6.
- Following the return to school of all pupils, teachers have been quick to check what pupils know and can remember in different subjects. Teachers successfully adapt lessons to help fill gaps in pupils' knowledge, including in English and mathematics. Consequently, pupils are receiving the right support to catch up.
- You prioritise reading and phonics, including in the Reception Year. You understand the importance of getting pupils to read confidently, as quickly as possible. As a result, teachers provide high-quality reading and phonics lessons, aimed at helping pupils who have fallen behind. Your focus on reading is enabling pupils to be more successful in other subjects.
- Leaders are continuing to deliver an appropriate remote curriculum for pupils who are not in school. Teachers make sure that remote learning is as similar as possible to the lessons provided to pupils attending school. Staff check how well pupils who are at home are getting on. Teachers take swift action to intervene if there are any problems. The remote offer has been successful in

allowing pupils to continue learning at home and is well placed to continue, if needed.

- Leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator, make sure that the education and care of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is a priority. You have kept the vital work of external experts going during the pandemic. For example, a speech and language therapist has continued to provide effective support to those who need it.
- Governors and trustees keep in regular contact with you and other senior leaders to hold you to account. They have played a key role in making sure that pupils have access to an effective education in the current circumstances. Governors are keen to keep improving the school, including the curriculum.
- However, governors do not have the same depth of understanding in all subjects. This prevents them from being able to have an equally strong influence in all curriculum areas.
- You are effective in using a range of support from different external partners, including local English and mathematics hubs. The trust is also providing support and training which is helping you to secure the necessary improvements.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, the multi-academy trust chief executive officer, representatives of those responsible for governance, and staff, to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also observed pupils from Years 1 and 2 reading and looked at examples of pupils' work and teachers' assessments in art, science and mathematics. We discussed the curriculum with subject leaders and teachers. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 87 free-text responses, and 37 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the Bath and Wells multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Bath and Wells, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Somerset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Stewart Gale
Her Majesty's Inspector