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Kirsty Chrysler
Headteacher
Altrincham C of E (Aided) Primary School
Townfield Road
Altrincham
Cheshire
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Dear Mrs Chrysler

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Altrincham C of E (Aided) Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Julie Barlow, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 2 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.

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 received a judgement of requires improvement at the school's most recent section 5 inspection which took place in March 2019.

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:

- overcome the delay caused by the pandemic to ensure that the new curriculum plans for art and design and technology are in place across all year groups, including early years.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, two new members of the leadership team have been appointed. Six new governors have joined the governing body. A new chair of governors has also been appointed.
- During the autumn term 2020, most pupils had to learn from home for a short period of time.
- At the time of this inspection, approximately one third of pupils were being educated on site. This includes most of the vulnerable pupils and pupils with an education, health and care plan. A small number of vulnerable pupils were being educated at home.

Main findings

- Leadership and governance have been strengthened in the past 12 months. During this period, you and other leaders reviewed and refined a wide range of curriculum plans. Revised curriculum plans are now in place for most subjects. That said, the implementation of the revised curriculum plans for a small number of subjects has been delayed due to the pandemic.
- The improvements that you and staff made to the curriculum has ensured that pupils continue to benefit from an education during the current COVID-19 restrictions. Staff's training in the autumn term 2020 developed their knowledge of how to adapt the curriculum effectively, so that it can be taught remotely. Pupils from the early years to Year 6 study the school's usual broad range of subjects, despite the current challenging circumstances.
- Teachers identify the knowledge that they want pupils to have. Teachers frequently check pupils' work. This gives them a clear understanding of what pupils can do. Teachers use this information well to plan what pupils need to learn next. Vulnerable pupils who are in school benefit from the help that they receive with their learning, particularly in mathematics. Engagement with parents and carers has strengthened during the recent lockdown. Clear expectations and guidance ensure that they know how to help their children with their learning at home.
- Pupils in school, and those pupils who are learning from home, are following the school's usual phonics programme. You ensure that phonics is delivered to pupils at home consistently, through daily online sessions. This helps children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 to pronounce letter

sounds correctly. It is also developing their ability to read new and unfamiliar words. Pupils at the early stages of reading in key stage 2 benefit from being in school. The individual support that they receive helps them to overcome gaps in their phonic knowledge. Daily story sessions in school are shared live across the internet with pupils learning at home. This helps to maintain pupils' love of reading for pleasure. The range of texts available online allows pupils to read widely and often.

- The special educational needs coordinator works well with other agencies and professionals. This helps to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), whether they are learning at home or in school, continue to receive the additional support that they need. Teachers adapt their plans effectively to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Pupils with SEND who are learning from home have the equipment and resources that they need to help them with their learning. Pupils with SEND who attend school benefit both academically and emotionally from the help that they receive from familiar staff.
- You are in regular contact with families to check that pupils are well and learning effectively. You work well with other agencies to ensure that vulnerable families receive any additional help that they may need during these challenging circumstances.
- The local authority and the diocese provide appropriate support to the new governing body. As a result, governors are now better placed to hold you and other leaders to account for the quality of education that pupils currently receive. Governors are mindful of the well-being and workload of staff, especially during the third national lockdown.
- Leaders at all levels benefit from the support that they receive from the local authority and the diocese. Partnership work with a national leader for education has enhanced your leadership and management skills. Collaborative work with leaders in other schools has helped subject leaders to improve the quality of the curriculum in most subjects from early years to Year 6.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, pupils, staff, representatives of those responsible for governance, a representative of the local authority and a representative from the diocese. We discussed leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown. We also reviewed documentation linked to governance and the curriculum.

We looked at 66 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 47 free-text responses. We reviewed eight emails from parents to Ofsted. We also reviewed 27 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

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

Yours sincerely

Amanda Stringer
Her Majesty's Inspector