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Paula Burns  
Headteacher  
Holy Trinity CE Primary Academy (Handsworth)  
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Birmingham  
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Dear Mrs Burns

**Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Holy Trinity CE Primary Academy (Handsworth)**

Following my remote inspection with Mark Sims, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 23 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 at its previous section 5 inspections. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in January 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:

- refine how curriculum content is sequenced in subjects such as art and design, music, design and technology and computing, so that pupils' knowledge, understanding and application of important concepts builds in a logical order.

## **Context**

- Since the previous inspection, you have appointed a new, permanent deputy headteacher. You currently have an additional deputy headteacher supporting your school until the end of the summer term 2021. Staffing is now more settled after a restructuring of subject leadership and some new teaching appointments.
- Between the start of January and 5 March 2021, 13% of pupils were educated on site. Approximately 35% of vulnerable pupils and 100% of pupils with education, health and care plans attended over this period.
- At the time of this inspection, 97% of pupils were attending on site.
- Since 2014, the school has closed early on Friday afternoons. The school day was lengthened from Monday to Thursday to accommodate this.

## **Main findings**

- Leaders know their school community well. They understand the issues they face, and offer support, for example providing food parcels. Leaders have used this opportunity to develop effective relationships with pupils' families.
- Leaders have worked hard and effectively to address weaknesses that existed in the school's provision. Leaders have rightly chosen to prioritise the core subjects of English and mathematics. Teachers have developed their subject knowledge in these areas. They now deliver the curriculum in small, logical steps, designed to help pupils know and remember more.
- Leaders and staff have quickly re-established learning and behaviour routines since opening to all pupils on 8 March 2021. In the first week back, teachers focused on addressing gaps in reading, writing and mathematics. They also prioritised pupils' well-being as part of their return to school. Teachers have planned and delivered activities to promote reading and speaking and listening skills.
- Leaders have made progress in developing the core curriculum. In reading, writing and mathematics, pupils' knowledge builds in small, incremental steps. In other subjects, there is more to do. For example, in art and design, music, design and technology and computing, topics do not build in a logical order. This makes it difficult for pupils to develop their understanding and

application of important concepts. The appointment of a seconded deputy headteacher has given leaders additional capacity to focus on developing middle leaders' curriculum knowledge and understanding. Consequently, they are now able to pick up the pace of improving the provision in the subject for which they have responsibility.

- Leaders are using various methods to identify what pupils have learned and remembered from the taught curriculum. In the core subjects, teachers build in opportunities to check what pupils know and remember. Leaders recognise the importance of using this information to help identify those pupils who need to catch up on their learning effectively.
- Leaders have thought hard about developing pupils' reading skills. Pupils are given support to access challenging texts. For example, pupils were shown an extract of the film 'Black Beauty' before reading the text so that they could better understand what they were reading. Pupils said that they are encouraged to read regularly.
- Leaders have changed the teaching of phonics to introduce a more sequenced approach, so children learn in a logical order. Phonics is taught daily and opportunities to assess pupils' progress are taken throughout the day, not just during the lesson. Short, afternoon sessions are in place to practise phonics skills. More formal interventions are also in place for those children who need them.
- Leaders have plans in place to deliver the curriculum remotely should a 'bubble' of pupils close or if pupils need to self-isolate. If a bubble closes, the school will move to its online platform and follow its usual curriculum. For those pupils self-isolating, the school has aligned learning from the Oak National Academy to match with the school's existing curriculum.
- Staff continue to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). During the lockdown, some pupils with SEND found some work too challenging. The special educational needs coordinator adapted this learning to make it more meaningful and accessible for those pupils.
- The trust recognises the school's improvement, particularly around stabilising staffing, improving the culture and raising expectations. Trust leaders have worked closely with the school to provide support. They have supported the development of middle leaders through effective training and coaching. Trust leaders have a clear sense of the improvements that have been made and the work that still needs to be done to improve the curriculum.
- The local governing board supports and challenges the school effectively. Weekly meetings with the chair allow governors to explore and challenge leaders' actions, including the support for the well-being of both staff and pupils.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other leaders, teaching staff and pupils. We also spoke with representatives of the Birmingham Diocesan multi-academy trust and the chair of the local academy board to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also looked at the local academy board's minutes of meetings, information on the school's website and observed pupils reading to an adult. We looked at eight responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including seven free-text responses, and eight staff questionnaires.

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

Yours sincerely

Eve Morris  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**