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20 April 2021

Kay Corley  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Corley

**Additional, remote monitoring inspection of William de Yaxley Church of England Academy**

Following my remote inspection with Katherine Douglas, 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 February 2020.

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:

- ensure all subject leaders have a full understanding of their role and responsibilities and are fully effective in their leadership roles
- ensure that all teachers understand how to best meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) so that all pupils with SEND can access a well-planned curriculum in all subjects.

## **Context**

- Since the previous inspection, the senior leadership structure has changed. The head of school has left and has not been replaced. The assistant headteacher was appointed as the acting deputy headteacher in September 2020.
- At the start of the spring term, when the school was only open to some children due to COVID-19 restrictions, approximately 40% of all pupils were attending on site. During this time, 78% of vulnerable pupils and 20% of pupils with an education, health and care plan were in school.
- At the time of this inspection, 99% of pupils were in school.
- At the time of this inspection, a small number of staff members were absent due to COVID-19.

## **Main findings**

- Following the previous inspection, leaders have worked on developing the school's curriculum. In September 2020, leaders introduced newly written plans for art, geography, history and science. Subject leaders check that teachers are using and adapting these plans so that pupils learn the planned content in the correct order and build on what they have learned before. However, this work is in its early stages of development and leaders have not checked the impact of the new curriculum plans on how well pupils are achieving.
- Since 8 March 2021, when pupils fully returned to school, there is a higher level of pupil attendance than normal. Leaders have reviewed and improved their plans for remote education. If pupils are learning from home, leaders are confident that all pupils can access the learning. Parents are positive about the support for pupils' learning during the current circumstances.
- When all pupils returned in the spring term, teachers checked what pupils remembered in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers are using this information to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. Leaders plan to organise catch-up sessions to support pupils who have fallen behind. Leaders want to

ensure that pupils remember what they have learned previously before pupils move on to new learning.

- Leaders are quick to identify when pupils need extra reading support. Weaker readers receive appropriately planned individual support to help them to read more fluently. Staff who listen to pupils read receive training to help them do this well. As pupils read with increasing confidence, staff encourage pupils to read with more expression. Staff help weaker readers to catch up quickly.
- Leaders know their vulnerable pupils well and keep in regular contact with them. When pupils do not attend school, leaders are quick to follow this up. Leaders have worked with local charities and continued to access external support, for example the play therapist for pupils who need this specialised support. There have also been more 'nurture check-ins' to support pupils' mental health. Leaders are providing effective support for vulnerable pupils.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is ambitious for pupils with SEND. The SENCo understands the individual needs of pupils with SEND well. Regular checks are carried out by the SENCo to make sure pupils with SEND are able to access their learning. Parents appreciate the use of online communication tools. This has strengthened the school's partnership with families. There is a variation in how well all teachers understand how to best support pupils with SEND. Some teachers require further training so that they can effectively support all pupils with SEND in lessons.
- Governors understand their role well. They are considerate of leaders' well-being. Leaders appreciate the regular online 'coffee catch-ups' with governors. When leaders provide information on the school, governors challenge this information. Governors are not afraid to question policies or curriculum decisions. Governors want to make sure that any changes made are in the best interests of all pupils.
- The trust offers effective support to school leaders. Staff attend training and network opportunities with staff from other trust schools. This has increased leaders' knowledge, understanding and confidence. Trust leaders are keen to ensure that leaders continue to develop the curriculum.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, the acting deputy headteacher, the SENCo, curriculum leaders, teaching assistants, representatives from the trust and governors to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also listened to pupils read and we spoke to pupils about their school experience. We carried out a scrutiny of the school's self-evaluation form. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 14 free-text

responses, and 15 staff questionnaires. We received one email from a parent during this inspection.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Ely, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cambridgeshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Maureen Su  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**