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Owen Rhodes  
Executive Headteacher  
The Norman Church of England Primary School  
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Northwold  
Thetford  
Norfolk  
IP26 5NB

Dear Mr Rhodes

**Additional, remote monitoring inspection of The Norman Church of England Primary School, Northwold**

Following my remote inspection 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 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 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 ensure that:

- subject leaders develop the knowledge and skills they need to carry out their leadership role effectively
- governors are well trained to deepen their knowledge and understanding, so they are able to confidently provide appropriate support and challenge to leaders.

### **Context**

- Since the previous inspection, one of the assistant headteachers has become the executive deputy headteacher across the three schools in the Trinity Partnership. The vice-chair of governors has recently been appointed as the new chair of governors. Two new teachers have been appointed following a reorganisation of the year groups and how the classes are arranged.
- Throughout the spring term, approximately 72% of pupils were educated at home. Around 94% of vulnerable pupils and all pupils with an education, health and care plan were learning in school.
- At the time of this inspection, 94% of pupils were in school. There were no pupils being taught remotely.

### **Main findings**

- Leaders have ensured that all pupils are able to access their education, whether in school or learning from home, during the current circumstances. When pupils were learning from home, staff made regular phone calls to all pupils to check on their welfare and to keep an eye on how well pupils were learning. When pupils were not engaging with their learning well at home, they were invited to attend school so teachers could provide additional support to these pupils.
- In most subjects, teachers have continued with the usual curriculum content. During the first half of the spring term, some aspects of physical education, music and computing were adapted. French lessons have been paused and will be taught in the summer term. Additional time has been added to the timetable for extra mental mathematics work because of what teachers know about pupils' gaps in learning.
- Since September 2019, you and your leaders have been developing a new curriculum. Leaders have a clear ambition for the curriculum to be broad and balanced. Equally, they want all pupils to have mastered the basics in reading, writing and mathematics. While medium-term progression plans are in place for science and music, other subjects are less well developed.

- Teachers check what pupils have learned and remembered during most lessons by asking questions and then providing feedback. Pupils have also completed tests, tasks and quizzes in reading, writing and mathematics to show what they have learned and remembered. This has helped teachers check for gaps in pupils' learning. Leaders said that their progress in checking the curriculum in subjects other than mathematics and English has been delayed due to COVID-19. Subject leaders have not checked how well pupils are achieving in other subjects.
- Reading is a priority for staff. All pupils have daily, focused reading time. More recently, teachers have been trained to teach a new phonics programme to Reception children and key stage 1 pupils. Leaders said that this was already having an impact on more pupils being able to sound out words in their reading. Pupils in key stage 1 are also having extra phonics sessions to recap on the sounds already taught. Pupils have been taught to predict what might happen next in their reading books. Older pupils have daily lessons practising a different reading skill each day. This work is still at an early stage of development.
- Leaders and staff know vulnerable pupils well. Nearly all vulnerable pupils attended school while the school was partially closed. This gave vulnerable pupils the chance to work in smaller focused groups. These arrangements helped pupils because they benefited from extra adult support with their learning. You and your staff provided extra online resources for the few pupils who needed support when they were learning at home. This enabled all pupils to access the curriculum successfully.
- Staff use an effective range of strategies so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) succeed in their learning. For example, pupils are given extra adult support. A few pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs are following personalised plans to help their return to school. Staff have accessed a wide range of training to ensure that they are able to confidently and effectively support pupils with SEND. Leaders report that this is to make sure that pupils do not fall further behind.
- The majority of the members of the governing body are new to their roles. Governors have accessed some training, but know that they need further support. The governing body has planned to work more closely with subject leaders. Governors are beginning to ask more challenging questions. Governors have not found out from leaders how the curriculum is being implemented yet.
- The trust has provided training on reading, phonics and curriculum leadership. Leaders have also accessed effective external support to inform their work. This is helping to improve teachers' subject knowledge, particularly of reading.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. I spoke to you, other senior leaders, trust representatives, pupils, staff and two members responsible for governance to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

I also looked at curriculum plans, leadership documents and policies. I looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 21 free-text responses, and 15 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.

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 Norfolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Isabel Davis  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**