

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Nicola Clarke
Principal
The Holy Family Catholic Primary School
Bicknor Road
Park Wood
Maidstone
ME15 9PS

Dear Mrs Clarke

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of The Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Frances Nation, Her Majesty's Inspector, of your school on Wednesday 24 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 September 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:

- complete the work to sequence the knowledge and skills that pupils need in each subject
- ensure that the school's approach to teaching the curriculum is consistent across every class so that all pupils learn well
- support pupils who are currently behind on the school's phonics programme to catch up quickly.

Context

- The senior leadership team, who had recently joined the school at the time of the last inspection, remains the same. A new early years leader joined the school in September 2020. The chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust resigned in December 2020. Currently, there is an acting CEO in post.
- Approximately 65% of pupils were educated at home when the school was closed to most pupils earlier this term. Nearly all vulnerable pupils and 65% of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) were attending school.
- At the time of this inspection, most pupils were attending school. A small number of staff who were shielding were working from home.

Main findings

- Leaders have been unwavering in making sure that pupils continue to get their education during the pandemic. They always have in mind 'The Parable of the Lost Sheep' as they try to live out their gospel values by reaching out to pupils and families in particular need of support. Impressively, nearly all vulnerable pupils were in school during the most recent partial closure.
- Leaders were determined that, as far as possible, pupils would get direct teaching whether they were learning in school or at home. Teachers provided daily live lessons following the usual curriculum to pupils learning remotely. In addition, staff provided online tuition to support pupils who needed to revisit what they had been taught.
- COVID-19 has hampered leaders' work to develop the curriculum as fully as they wanted by now. Drawing on relevant research, leaders are working through each subject to carefully consider the order that knowledge and skills should be taught in. They have not yet tackled all subjects. There is more to do to make sure that all staff are teaching new plans as intended so that pupils across the school know more and remember more.

- The trust's commitment to making reading the number one priority is evident. They have invested much in staff's professional development so that they can teach reading more effectively. Throughout lockdown, leaders provided pupils at home with online access to reading books, including all books on the phonics programme.
- Leaders are not able to fully implement the phonics programme as intended due to 'bubble' restrictions. They are making suitable adjustments in the current circumstances. Now that all pupils are back in school, staff have checked what pupils remember from the phonics programme. They have found that many pupils are behind where they should be. Nonetheless, leaders are providing the right support to help pupils catch up.
- In mathematics, leaders' checks have enabled them to prioritise the areas that pupils need to be taught again to secure their understanding. This includes regular practice of calculation methods and fluency in number. In other subjects, such as design and technology and science, teachers are providing pupils with more time to develop the practical skills they could not easily learn at home.
- Leaders have improved the provision for pupils with SEND. Staff are now better trained and, as a result, are meeting pupils' needs in the classroom so they can learn alongside their classmates. Leaders ensured that outside agencies continued to provide pupils with SEND with the help they needed while the school was partially closed.
- The trust really knows the school and the journey it is on. Governors know what the school's priorities are. They receive the right information from leaders. This means they challenge leaders and hold them to account for the actions they are taking to improve the school. The trust assured themselves about the quality of education provided while the school was closed to most pupils.
- There are clear lines of accountability within the trust. The trust's primary improvement team knows what leaders need to do to improve the teaching of the curriculum. To address this, they are working alongside teachers to help improve their expertise and ensure that pupils are knowing more and remembering more of the taught curriculum.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, the executive principal, senior leaders, the chair of trustees, the chair of the local governing body, staff, pupils and the senior primary improvement adviser from the trust, to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 24 free-text responses, and 27 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of trustees of the Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Kent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

James Broadbridge
Her Majesty's Inspector