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Debbie Mulcock
Acting Headteacher
St Anne's and St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School
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Dear Miss Mulcock

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of St Anne's and St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Stephen Bentham, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 10 and 11 February 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 had three successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in May 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:

- develop a more carefully ordered curriculum in subjects other than English and mathematics, including for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)
- ensure that members of the governing body fulfil their strategic roles appropriately.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, there have been considerable changes in staffing. More than half of the current teaching staff are new to the school.
- You were appointed as acting headteacher in September 2019. An acting deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2020. An acting key stage 2 lead and an interim special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) have since taken up their posts. There have been no changes to the governing body.
- During the autumn term 2020, approximately one half of all pupils accessed education at home for short periods of time. This included all pupils in the Reception Year and a class of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils.
- At the time of this inspection, approximately two thirds of pupils were being educated at home. Approximately two thirds of vulnerable pupils were attending school. Roughly one in three pupils with SEND were also attending on site.

Main findings

- You and the other leaders have ensured that all pupils have access to education, whether they are learning at home or in school. Vulnerable pupils, pupils with SEND and the children of key workers who are attending school benefit from time with their usual class teacher.
- Following the previous inspection, there was considerable uncertainty around the leadership of the school. Since your appointment as acting headteacher, you have taken swift and effective action to stabilise the school and develop leadership capacity at all levels.
- Now that a full suite of leaders are in post, you and the leadership team have started the process of reviewing and refining the curriculum. For example, leaders have implemented more carefully ordered curriculum plans in English and mathematics. While you have embarked on the process of reviewing and refining the curriculum in other subjects, your work has been disrupted by the COVID-19 restrictions. There are curriculum plans in place for subjects other than English and mathematics. However, there is more to do on these plans

to ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND, can build their knowledge through a well-ordered curriculum.

- Pupils benefit from the same curriculum content whether they are working in school or remotely. Teachers have been trained well. This means they use a range of effective strategies to introduce new learning to those pupils working at home. Teachers check how well pupils are learning. They then provide extra help if they identify that pupils have become muddled. Parents and carers are positive about the remote education provided for their children.
- While subject leaders have been in the process of reviewing the curriculum, you have continued to prioritise the teaching of reading. For instance, younger children and pupils, including those working remotely, access well-planned daily phonics lessons. Each day, pupils working at home join those pupils in school for a 'story session' led by the teacher. This is helping to further promote the joy of reading across the school. Teachers also read with some pupils using online books that have been carefully matched to pupils' phonic knowledge. Teachers are quick to provide support to any pupil who needs additional help with their reading. For example, those pupils who are at risk of falling behind get more help from their teacher. Older pupils can access a wide range of online books and they are encouraged to read daily.
- Teachers keep in touch with pupils to check on their well-being. You and the school's leadership team provide appropriate support for individual pupils when this required. For example, you ensure that all vulnerable pupils have access to an electronic device when working remotely. This means that vulnerable pupils can access lessons daily and join in with their friends.
- You and the interim SENCo are well informed about the needs of pupils with SEND. However, teachers are in the early stages of adapting curriculum plans for this group of pupils in subjects other than English and mathematics. Staff contact the families of pupils with SEND frequently. This helps those pupils with SEND who are working remotely to access and complete their work.
- Although members of the governing body have acted to stabilise staffing, they have been too slow to appoint a substantive headteacher. This is causing undue uncertainty among the school community and is hindering school improvement. Moreover, a small number of governors have lost sight of their core purpose. Instead of taking a strategic role in holding leaders to account, they have become too involved in the day-to-day running of the school.
- You and the leadership team welcome the support provided by a range of external partners. This includes support from the local authority, the Diocese of Salford and other local networks. The local authority, together with the diocese, recognise that the governing body requires additional support. They are providing appropriate training to enable governors to fulfil their roles

more effectively. You and other leaders are working with a local 'English hub' to further develop the reading curriculum.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke with a range of people to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown. These included: you and other leaders in school; teachers; members of the governing body; representatives of the local authority; and representatives of the Diocese of Salford. We spoke to a group of pupils and observed them reading to a trusted adult. We also spoke to a small number of parents on the telephone.

We considered a range of documentation provided by the school, including curriculum plans, pre-recorded lessons and samples of pupils' work. We also scrutinised minutes from previous governing body meetings. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 14 free-text responses, and we reviewed 22 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 Salford, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Lancashire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Garry White
Her Majesty's Inspector