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10 March 2021

Anne Clinton
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Dear Mrs Clinton

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of St Patrick's RC Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Sheila Iwaskow, 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.

Following changes to government guidance and the imposition of COVID-19 (coronavirus) lockdown restrictions, 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 three successive judgements of requires improvement. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in March 2018.

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.

Context

- Since the last section 5 inspection, the senior leadership team has been remodelled and now supports two schools as part of a hard federation. Two governors have joined the governing body and two have left since the last inspection.
- A small proportion of pupils had to work remotely for short periods during autumn term 2020. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 were affected more than other year groups.
- At the time of this inspection, just under three quarters of pupils were being educated in school. More than three quarters of vulnerable pupils and almost all pupils with an education, health and care plan were on site.

Main findings

- You, other leaders and governors have made sure that all pupils, whether they are learning on site or remotely, have equal access to the curriculum. This means that pupils continue to enjoy their education despite the current challenging circumstances. You have made sure that pupils and their parents and carers understand your high expectations about accessing education during the third lockdown. Teachers provide supportive feedback on pupils' learning online or on the telephone. Parents appreciate the guidance that they get from staff to help them support their children's learning at home. This has led to improved engagement from those pupils who are learning remotely.
- Before March 2020, you and other leaders were developing the curriculum so that each subject included the knowledge that pupils would learn and the order in which they would learn it. This work has continued despite the pandemic. Subject leaders have received a wide range of appropriate support to develop their leadership skills. As a result, these leaders are more confident and skilled in maintaining a clear overview of their subject across the school.
- Subject leaders and teachers have carefully considered which parts of the curriculum can successfully be delivered during the current time. They have changed the order in which some subject content is taught so that pupils who are learning from home can access all of the activities. For example, in physical education, there is a greater focus on keeping fit outdoors. This has replaced the planned unit of work on gymnastics for the time being. Subject leaders have spent their time well, identifying the curriculum content that has been missed this term. They are adapting the curriculum to cover these areas once all pupils return to school.
- Teaching all children to become confident readers remains a key priority for leaders. Pupils in school and at home access pre-recorded videos for their daily phonics session. Teachers pronounce sounds clearly, which supports effective phonics learning. Parents find these videos helpful. Younger pupils, including those in the early years, read books that are carefully matched to

the sounds that they know. This allows them to read confidently and well. Pupils are encouraged to read often. Leaders have invested in online books, which has improved the range of reading material available in school. Pupils told me that these books are engaging, enjoyable and support their development as readers.

- The special educational needs coordinator holds regular meetings with staff to check how pupils' needs are being met. She continues to liaise with other professionals, such as educational psychologists. This improves the ability of staff to support pupils' individual needs. You have high aspirations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Parents of children with SEND receive personalised support and guidance, including frequent contact to check on pupils' welfare and learning. This has improved parental confidence and ensures that pupils with SEND continue to access education.
- Governors have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They hold you and other leaders to account for the decisions that leaders make. Recently, governors have focused their support and challenge on how the curriculum is being delivered during the current circumstances. They have a clear understanding of the work completed by subject leaders. This has enhanced their understanding of curriculum development across the school. Governors offer regular, supportive conversations with senior leaders and they promote the well-being of all staff.
- The local authority is aware of the impact that the pandemic has had on the school. It knows the school well and provides purposeful support. This has helped to improve subject leadership and the remote education offer. Local authority advisers help you and other leaders to identify appropriate next steps for further school improvement.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, pupils, staff, governors and a representative of the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also looked at a selection of evidence provided by leaders to show how the curriculum is being developed and how education is currently being provided. This included curriculum plans, and examples of teaching materials and pupils' work. We also observed pupils reading to a familiar adult. We scrutinised minutes from governors' meetings and information regarding the support provided by the local authority. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including four free-text responses, and 23 staff questionnaires.

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

Yours sincerely

Adam Sproston
Her Majesty's Inspector