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Shelley England
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Dear Mrs England

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of St Martin's C of E Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Sue Costello, 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 May 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:

- build the role of subject leaders so that they check consistently how well the intended curriculum is actually being remembered by pupils.

Context

- The current headteacher took up her post in September 2020. The chief executive officer was appointed permanently to the role in September 2020. A new chair of governors started in October 2020.
- When the school was closed to most pupils at the start of the spring term, approximately 30% of pupils were attending on site. Around 80% of the school's vulnerable pupils and 40% of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) attended school.
- At the time of this inspection, all pupils were attending on site.

Main findings

- Despite some recent changes to the leadership at the school, trust leaders have been relentless in continuing to improve the curriculum. They have worked successfully with a range of experts to do this. As a result, the curriculum in most subjects is now well organised.
- You prioritise reading, recognising the key importance of this for pupils. You have ensured that there is an effective phonics programme in place to help pupils learn to read. You have developed teachers' skills and confidence in reading aloud to pupils. There is a clear and consistent approach to teaching reading.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved. There are now agreed teaching strategies in place. You have provided staff with helpful resources and high-quality support and development. In the staff survey, all staff who expressed a view said that they are supported well to improve their work.
- You and your staff team have worked with determination to make sure that pupils continue to learn the school's planned curriculum. Although all pupils are now learning at school, you have plans for remote learning ready should this be needed in the future.
- Teachers work with enthusiasm to find new ways to make sure that pupils remember important information in each subject. Subject leader roles are developing. You want to make sure that leaders check methodically the impact of improvements on pupils' knowledge across the school.
- The special educational needs coordinator and the pastoral team have high aspirations for vulnerable pupils, including those with SEND. They keep a close watch on how well these pupils make progress towards their individual

targets. The SEND team works closely with other agencies to make sure that there is effective support to meet pupils' individual needs.

- In the free-text responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, parents and carers were overwhelmingly positive about the improvements that you are making. In particular, they praised home learning and the communication between school and home.
- Governors have been active, seeking assurances from leaders about the education provided to pupils during this time. Governors and trustees are ambitious for the school. They are determined to make the improvements needed, despite the challenges presented by the pandemic.
- The trust has wisely worked with support partners to make improvements to the curriculum. The school improvement adviser has carried out a review of learning, which has been helpful in identifying strengths and next steps for improvement.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, the multi-academy trust chief executive officer, pupils, teachers, the school improvement partner and representatives of those responsible for governance, including the chair of the trustees, to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also looked at examples of learning and feedback to pupils. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 39 free-text responses, and 27 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the St Barnabas Church of England Multi Academy Trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Truro, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cornwall. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tonwen Empson
Her Majesty's Inspector