

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



22 March 2021

Debbie Field
Headteacher
St Gregory's Church of England Primary School
New Street
Marnhull
Dorset
DT10 1PZ

Dear Mrs Field

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of St Gregory's Church of England Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Sue Costello, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 2 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.

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 two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous two section 5 inspections. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in February 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:

- ensure that curriculum plans for the foundation subjects are adapted to ensure pupils' progress across the school's mixed-aged classes.

Context

- Since the last inspection, three governors have joined the school, including a new safeguarding governor.
- Across the autumn term 2020, a small number of pupils had to be educated at home.
- At the time of this inspection, approximately 65% of pupils were being educated at home. Around 80% of all vulnerable pupils and those with special educational and/or disabilities (SEND) were attending on site.

Main findings

- Since the last inspection, you have rightly focused on empowering staff to become effective subject leaders. They have taken part in high-quality training. Staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to lead their subjects well. This is particularly the case in English and mathematics.
- Leaders have made important adjustments to the curriculum as part of their response to COVID-19. For example, in mathematics, a daily focus on securing pupils' recall of number facts is beginning to pay off. Pupils say that they are enjoying mathematics and are getting better at explaining their thinking.
- Leaders have implemented a range of improvements to the reading curriculum. A new phonics scheme, as well as books to improve pupils' comprehension, is beginning to have an impact. For many older pupils, in school or learning remotely, teachers have provided extra reading sessions to increase their confidence and fluency.
- In January 2021, you acted quickly to revamp your remote education offer following feedback from parents. Pupils attending school and those learning at home study the same curriculum. You have ensured that pupils have access to electronic devices to support their learning. Teachers offer weekly online 'drop in' meetings for pupils who need extra help. The majority of parents are pleased with the recent changes.
- You have encouraged vulnerable pupils to attend school. Almost all are attending. Where this is not the case, you make telephone calls and weekly home visits to check on pupils' well-being.

- In September 2020, you and other leaders set about improving the curriculum in the foundation subjects. Curriculum leaders know what they want pupils to learn. However, you recognise that some of their work is at an early stage of development. Not all subject plans have yet been adapted for the school's mixed-aged classes. This is most evident in art and design, history and geography. Nevertheless, you are confident that improved subject plans will be in place by the end of the summer term 2021.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) provides effective support for pupils with SEND. This has improved since the last inspection. Well-trained staff support pupils pastorally and academically. The SENCo has detailed and precise plans. Her work with teachers is ensuring there is effective provision for pupils with additional needs. Staff support pupils who fall behind to catch up quickly.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the school. They understand the strengths and areas for development. Governors appreciate the support and challenge provided by external specialists. This is helping them to understand their role more effectively. Governors hold leaders to account for the quality of education they provide, including remote education. They ask leaders challenging questions to ensure that reading is at the forefront of the curriculum.
- You have benefitted from a range of support. Your work with an external improvement adviser is helping subject leaders to refine their curriculum plans. They speak positively about the support they receive. You have started to work with a local group of schools to share best practice around the curriculum. Specialist teachers from the local mathematics and literacy hubs are helping to develop staff's subject knowledge further.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, the deputy headteacher, a representative from the local authority and an external school improvement adviser. We also held meetings with staff and four governors to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We looked at samples of pupils' work and reviewed documentation. An inspector talked to a group of pupils. We also looked at 36 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 27 free-text responses, and nine staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Salisbury, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Dorset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Dale Burr
Her Majesty's Inspector