

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Sarah Murphy
Headteacher
St Werburgh's Catholic Primary School
Park Grove
Birkenhead
Merseyside
CH41 2TD

Dear Mrs Murphy

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of St Werburgh's Catholic Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Garry White, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 3 to 4 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 two successive judgements of requires improvement. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in February 2020.

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 teachers make effective use of assessment to plan the next steps of learning in reading for all pupils
- ensure that all pupils who are learning from home get the most out of the resources that teachers provide
- develop and plan an ambitious curriculum in the small number of subjects that are still to be reviewed.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, a small number of teachers have left the school and two new teachers have joined. Leaders have reorganised their leadership structure, including roles and responsibilities. A new leader for early years has been appointed. A new chair of governors is also in post.
- During the autumn term of 2020, approximately one quarter of pupils accessed their education from home for short periods of time due to self-isolation. For a very small proportion of pupils, this happened more than once.
- At the time of this inspection, around two thirds of pupils were being educated at home. Approximately one half of the vulnerable pupils, and about one quarter of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), were attending school on site.
- There are currently no staff absent due to COVID-19. Leaders enable most class teachers to work from home.

Main findings

- You and the leadership team have ensured that pupils continue to receive an education during this period of national lockdown.
- The previous inspection took place just prior to the start of the pandemic. Consequently, you and the leadership team have only had a short amount of time to address the areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection. That said, you have started to strengthen the quality of leadership. You have begun to hold leaders more fully to account for the quality of their work. However, there is still much to do to improve the overall quality of education that pupils receive in some subjects.
- You and other leaders have successfully introduced new curriculum plans in science. Teachers are now using plans for reading, writing, mathematics and religious education that leaders had produced previously. These plans set out clearly the content and the knowledge that pupils must learn. Leaders have

checked that teachers are following these plans. Pupils' work shows that, in these subjects, pupils are building up their knowledge more consistently than in the past.

- In geography and personal, social, health and economic education, leaders are revising their curriculum plans. However, in a number of other subjects, for example history, art and design, and music, leaders have not agreed what pupils should know at different points in their learning. There is more to do to create an ambitious curriculum in these remaining subjects.
- While you currently offer on-site places to all children of key workers and some vulnerable pupils, many of these pupils continue to learn from home. Teachers use an online system that enables pupils to access the same education whether they are learning at home or at school. Teachers successfully adapt their curriculum plans to ensure that pupils, including vulnerable pupils, are able to learn new things.
- Teachers communicate regularly with pupils through the school's online system. This is to check that pupils understand any new learning. Teachers provide appropriate support for pupils, including vulnerable pupils, who are learning from home. However, some pupils who are learning at home do not make full use of the resources that teachers provide.
- Where children in early years and pupils in key stage 1 engage well with their teachers, they continue to develop their phonics knowledge well. Equally, older pupils strengthen their reading and writing knowledge through appropriate activities. However, leaders have not agreed a consistent method for how teachers check pupils' reading knowledge when pupils are learning from home. Consequently, significant numbers of pupils who are not able to read as well as they should are in danger of falling even further behind.
- You and the leadership team ensure that pupils with SEND are supported well in their learning. The two special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) check that teachers provide suitable learning activities and resources for pupils with SEND. Parents and carers with whom we spoke said that they valued the support that they receive from the SENCOs. Regular contact with some of these families is improving how well pupils with SEND engage with the materials that their teachers are providing during the pandemic.
- Governors have made effective use of online conferencing to hold regular meetings with you and other school leaders. They have focused on the safety and well-being of staff and pupils. They are well informed about improvements being made at the school. Governors are developing their ability to challenge and support leaders in improving the curriculum and the education that is currently on offer to pupils.

- The local authority has commissioned a wide range of appropriate support for the school. You and other staff have worked successfully with a range of consultants and local networks. This has helped to develop leadership throughout the school.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We held meetings with a range of people to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown. These included the headteacher and other leaders in the school, pupils, teachers, representatives from the governing body, representatives of the local authority, a representative of the Diocese of Shrewsbury, and consultants working with the school. We also spoke with a small group of parents on the telephone.

We considered the documentation provided by the school. We looked at curriculum plans and records of checks on the quality of education carried out by leaders. We also looked at minutes of meetings of the governing body. We reviewed the 11 free-text parental responses to Ofsted's Parent View and the staff questionnaires. There were insufficient responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey to analyse. We looked at samples of pupils' work uploaded through the internet. We also listened to pupils reading in a video recording.

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

Yours sincerely

Claire Cropper
Her Majesty's Inspector