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Ali Pook
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Dear Mrs Pook

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Curry Rivel Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Jennifer Gibbs, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 4 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 judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspection(s). The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in July 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:

- improve subject leadership so that it is effective across the curriculum
- ensure that curriculum content is carefully organised, and teachers use assessment more precisely to adapt their teaching.

Context

- Since the last inspection, there has been significant change in leadership and staffing. In April 2020, you were appointed as the headteacher. Most subject leaders are new to the role. There is a new chair and vice-chair of the governing body. In addition, three new governors have joined the governing body. Two new teachers have also been recruited.
- Across the autumn term, approximately 17% of pupils experienced a period of remote education due to COVID-19. This included all pupils in the Years 5 and 6 'bubble.'
- At the time of this inspection, 32% of pupils were attending school. Approximately 82% of vulnerable pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), were also learning in school.

Main findings

- You have shown strong resolve to steer the school through a period of substantial change. You have ensured that pupils have appropriate technology and support to access learning when at home. Such actions mean that all pupils are being provided with education either remotely or on site. At the same time, you have continued to work on the areas identified for improvement at the previous section 5 inspection, for example reading.
- Most subject leaders are new to their roles. You are working hard on improving the effectiveness of subject leadership. As a result, English and mathematics leadership is improving.
- The curriculum planning in mathematics is more advanced than in other subjects. The leader for mathematics makes good use of the valuable external support available. As a result, she has restructured the curriculum so that pupils' mathematical knowledge builds well over time. She has made appropriate changes to ensure that pupils catch up on any learning that is not secure.
- However, in other subjects, such as geography, science and art and design, leaders' work to restructure the curriculum is in its infancy. Consequently, teachers' curriculum planning and use of assessment in these subjects is not developed well enough.

- Since your appointment, you rightly focused on developing an effective curriculum for reading. You have made sure that reading books match the letters and sounds that pupils know. In the early years, Years 1 and 2, pupils receive daily phonics lessons. This is helping children in the early years to make a strong start. Your checks found that some pupils in Year 1 have weaknesses in their phonics knowledge. You have strong plans in place to help these pupils catch up.
- The special educational needs coordinator keeps in regular contact with pupils and families. She is checking whether these pupils can access and complete their work. Her work is ensuring that regardless of whether pupils with SEND are working remotely or in school, they are having their needs met. For example, pupils continue to access speech and language support.
- Since January 2021, vulnerable pupils and children of key workers follow the same curriculum content as pupils who are working remotely. Staff ensure that pupils receive daily learning in English, mathematics and at least one other subject. You have also ensured that staff provide additional sessions to support pupils' well-being. Teachers check pupils' work and provide feedback. Subject leaders recognise that this is not always effective in identifying what pupils know and understand.
- Governors have a strong understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They recognise that the recent systems and staffing structures that you have put in place need time to become established. Notably, governors are working well with you and your staff to bring about further improvements. Governors are taking effective action to assure themselves that all pupils are receiving an appropriate education in the current circumstances.
- The local authority is holding leaders, including governors, to account through regular meetings to discuss school improvement work. Such actions have been a catalyst for stabilising staffing and beginning to implement school improvement initiatives. You have strong relationships with the external advisers that support the school. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school very well. This is providing you with valuable insight to help improve the quality of education. However, COVID-19 has delayed the impact of some of this work.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, pupils, subject leaders, local authority representatives, and members of the governing body to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We considered information about the school's remote education offer on the school website. We heard some pupils read. We also looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 78 free-text responses, and 29 staff questionnaires.

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

Yours sincerely

Matt Middlemore
Her Majesty's Inspector