

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



23 April 2021

Jennie Müller
Headteacher
Yaxham Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School
Norwich Road
Yaxham
Norfolk
NR19 1RU

Dear Mrs Müller

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Yaxham Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Following my remote inspection with Fiona Webb, 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 section 5 inspections. 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 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 all curriculum plans inform teachers to be able to teach important knowledge sequentially, so that pupils can build on their prior knowledge over time
- make sure all subject leaders are given training and supported to be able to carry out their leadership roles effectively
- provide training for teachers so they have a secure understanding of how pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn effectively.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, a new chair of governors has been appointed.
- Throughout the autumn term, a small number of pupils had to learn from home due to COVID-19.
- During the time of this inspection, all pupils were learning remotely due to the whole school 'bubble' having been sent home due to COVID-19.
- At the time of this inspection, a few members of staff were isolating.

Main findings

- Before the pandemic, leaders had been reviewing their curriculum in all subjects. Leaders focused on English and mathematics first. Plans in other subjects are not as well developed. This curriculum work has been slowed by COVID-19. The curriculum plans do not all identify the key knowledge pupils need to know. Subject leaders have not received sufficient training to ensure they can carry out their role effectively. Subject leaders are not consistently checking how well pupils are doing throughout the school in their subject areas.
- During the current lockdown, leaders have changed the order in which they teach some of the planned topics. Leaders have decided that some content would be better taught in school when all pupils return. For example, in relationships and sex education.
- Leaders are taking effective action to provide education to pupils in the current circumstances. Pupils have pre-recorded videos which include instructions for each day. Teachers have started to trial 'live' online sessions to support pupils' well-being. Leaders have provided laptops where necessary, so pupils are able to access remote learning from home. Leaders check that pupils are completing their work and contact parents if there are concerns.

- Younger pupils continue to have daily phonics sessions. Leaders make sure that pupils are still learning the same sounds as they would in school. Leaders are enthusiastic about reading to pupils to inspire pupils to read for enjoyment themselves. Families are able to use the school's makeshift 'shed' library so that pupils can borrow a range of books. This is encouraging pupils to read regularly.
- Leaders make sure that pupils with SEND can access their learning. Pupils with SEND have personalised support in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND are accessing the same curriculum content as their peers. While all pupils with SEND can access their learning, teachers do not routinely consider pupils' needs when they set work in all subjects. This means that pupils with SEND do not always receive effective support in lessons.
- Leaders know their pupils and families well and are providing effective support. Leaders encourage all vulnerable pupils to be on site during this time. Leaders continue to work with external agencies to support their vulnerable pupils. Leaders provide extra care and practical help to pupils, so pupils are able to attend school. Leaders keep in regular contact with all their pupils to check on their well-being.
- Governors care about leaders' well-being. Governors ask questions about the curriculum to find out what this looks like throughout the school for all pupils. Governors expect leaders to report on how well pupils are learning, and they take account of parent views. Governors are taking effective action at this time. This ensures that leaders are providing education in the current circumstances.
- The local authority provides practical advice to leaders during this time. Leaders appreciate this help, particularly around how to manage the safety of the school. The local authority acknowledges that there is more to do to improve leaders' knowledge around the curriculum.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, the higher level teaching assistant, governors and a representative of the local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also carried out a work scrutiny of the resources used for remote learning and we reviewed subject plans. We looked at the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 31 free-text responses, and 13 staff questionnaires.

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

Yours sincerely

Maureen Su
Her Majesty's Inspector