

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



22 October 2020

Lesley Grant
Headteacher
Staplegrove Church School
Hudson Way
Staplegrove
Taunton
Somerset
TA2 6UP

Dear Mrs Grant

Ofsted visit to Staplegrove Church School

Following my visit with Simon Rowe, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 1 October 2020, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the visit's findings. Thank you for the time you made available to discuss your actions since September 2020, when the government expected all schools to open fully to all pupils.

This visit was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended) and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for visiting schools while routine inspections are temporarily suspended.

Ofsted's visits to schools during the autumn term are not inspections. We are not giving graded judgements. We did not undertake the usual range of inspection activities and were unable to check other sources of evidence, such as visits to lessons or looking at pupils' work. The content of this letter gives an overview of our discussions about what has happened in your school this term.

During the visit, we spoke to you, the deputy headteacher, who is also the school's designated safeguarding lead, a senior teacher and the special educational needs coordinator. We did not speak to pupils because of the protective measures in place.

Context

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's education system is managing the return to full

education for pupils, following an extended break in formal schooling due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic.

In undertaking this focused work, HMI are visiting a broad range of schools. HMI will visit a sample of:

- approximately 1,200 schools across all Ofsted grades (outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate)
- maintained schools, academies and free schools, special schools and centres of alternative provision, including those in cities, and coastal, town or rural communities.

The information from this visit will feed into Ofsted's national reporting so that the insights can be shared with the government and the education sector. We did not find any significant concerns during the visit. In such a case, an inspection report would be published on our website and available to parents and carers.

We did not consider your response to COVID-19 during the spring and summer terms 2020, when the school was not open to all pupils.

From this visit, inspectors noted that:

- The school opened to all pupils on 7 September 2020. All pupils are attending on a full-time basis. Reception-aged children followed the school's normal approach to starting school by undertaking a phased start. This year group is also now attending full time.
- Pupils' attendance is in line with the school's normal attendance figures for this time of year. No year-group 'bubbles' were isolating at the time of this visit.
- Pupils are studying the full range of subjects. Staff have adjusted the order in which key knowledge is taught in some areas of the curriculum. For instance, in computing, staff are teaching pupils how to be safe online earlier in the year than was originally planned.
- Staff are currently assessing pupils' prior learning in reading, writing and mathematics. They plan to use this information to design tasks linked to pupils' starting points.
- In reading, staff are beginning to identify what pupils have remembered, including in phonics. Leaders say that their initial findings show that some pupils' achievement in reading has dipped. Some pupils are currently revisiting previous learning in 'reminder sessions'.
- In mathematics, staff are revisiting previously taught content with pupils at the beginning of lessons, referred to as 'flashback' sessions. Staff then plan new learning based on pupils' starting points and age-related expectations.

- In the wider curriculum, staff have made changes to what is taught and when. For instance, in music pupils are undertaking theory-based learning rather than practical tasks. In physical education some aspects of the curriculum, such as swimming, have been removed for the time being.
- It is anticipated that pupils will return to the school's full curriculum by summer 2021.
- Since returning in September, leaders have continued to make the school's face-to-face teaching materials available online. The school's approach to remote learning runs in parallel with what is taught in the classrooms. Pupils can access the school's remote learning resources should they be needed in the future.

Thank you again for contributing to this important national work. The views and experiences you have shared will help to inform future policy.

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 multi-academy trust, 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

Elizabeth Farr
Her Majesty's Inspector