

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



27 October 2020

Deborah Fance
Headteacher
Heath Mount Primary School
Mary Street
Balsall Heath
Birmingham
West Midlands
B12 9ST

Dear Mrs Fance

Ofsted visit to Heath Mount Primary School

Following my visit with Mark Sims, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 8 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, and the senior leadership team including the senior leader responsible for safeguarding. 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 3 September 2020.
- You told us that attendance is lower than it would normally be for this time of year. Most absences are in some way related to COVID-19. At the time of the visit, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils were isolating at home.
- Leaders have taken a phased approach in returning to the usual curriculum. After an initial period, where teachers re-established routines and expectations, there is now a focus on core skills in English and mathematics. Your aim is for pupils to return to their usual curriculum by spring term 2021.
- Your routine assessment procedures are being used to check what pupils can remember from before the period when schools were only open to some children, due to COVID-19 restrictions. This information is being made available for teachers to support pupils in their learning.
- Reading continues to be a priority. You have assessed all pupils to identify what gaps they have in their use of sounds and their understanding of words. An intervention programme has been established to help those who you have identified have fallen behind.
- Teachers are focusing on mathematics topics, such as shape, space and data handling, which were not taught in the summer term. Pupils also use an online program to practise their numerical skills in school and at home.

- You have made changes to the way you teach the wider curriculum. As part of your phased return to learning, pupils are taught some subjects as part of a theme, such as 'Our wonderful world'.
- Remote learning is in place for those pupils who are isolating. Pupils can access work through an online platform or are provided with paper-based tasks. You have a timetable for each year group, which is similar to your current curriculum.

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 regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Birmingham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mark Howes
Her Majesty's Inspector