

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



27 October 2020

Margaret Sanderson
Headteacher
St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School
High Street
Carisbrooke
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 1NR

Dear Mrs Sanderson

Ofsted visit to St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School

Following my visit with Aimee Floyd, 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 senior leadership team and the school business manager. 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 reopened to all year groups on 3 September 2020. All pupils are expected to attend full time.
- Attendance is at a similar level to this time last year.
- Staff are teaching the full range of national curriculum subjects, although teachers have made some adjustments to the order in which content is usually taught. For example, pupils are not currently attending swimming lessons as the local pool has not yet reopened. Instead, these lessons are scheduled to go ahead in the summer term. Leaders intend to return to the usual curriculum by summer 2021.
- So far, staff have undertaken assessments of pupils' knowledge in English and mathematics to help gauge what pupils know and have remembered. Teachers have used this information to adapt the curriculum. For example, teachers are recapping some parts of the phonics curriculum that pupils missed or have forgotten.
- Leaders' initial assessments show that pupils are less confident at solving mathematical problems. Staff are supporting pupils to revisit how to use and apply written and mental methods for calculation. Staff are teaching both the usual content for this term and covering some of the content that was missed over the summer term.
- Through conversations with pupils and families, leaders have found that pupils need some help to understand the changes and challenges they have

encountered since March. To address this, staff have given additional curriculum time to developing pupils' personal, social, health and economic education. In the Reception Year, staff are focused on developing children's communication, social skills and physical development.

- Staff have planned to provide work packs to families in the event of a partial or full school closure. The packs will mirror the planned curriculum, and teachers will be available to provide remote support should pupils and families need this.

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 director of education for the diocese of Portsmouth, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for the Isle of Wight. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Daniel Lambert
Her Majesty's Inspector