

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



28 October 2020

Emma Howell
Headteacher
Newtown Soberton Infant School
Church Road
Newtown
Fareham
Hampshire
PO17 6LJ

Dear Mrs Howell

Ofsted visit to Newtown Soberton Infant School

Following my visit 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, I spoke to you and met briefly with your chair of governors at her request. I 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 on 5 September, and by 7 September was fully open to Years 1 to 6. Children in early years were offered a staggered start and were attending full time by 21 September.
- Pupils' attendance this term is broadly in line with what it was at this point last year. Staff are working with families to help all pupils attend regularly.
- Pupils are learning across all the subjects that they usually would. Teachers have made temporary changes to some subjects to prioritise reading, writing and mathematics. You anticipate a return to the school's normal curriculum next term.
- Teachers have used assessments of pupils' reading and phonics skills to adapt their teaching. During our conversation, you praised many parents' efforts during the period of COVID-19 restrictions to maintain their child's early reading skills. Teachers are building on this to develop pupils' vocabulary, fluency and accuracy.
- You have identified a dip in the quality of many pupils' writing. Teachers are providing opportunities for pupils to regain their stamina and practise their writing.
- Teachers' early assessments have identified that pupils need to catch up in aspects of mathematics such as number and place value. As well as focusing on these skills in mathematics lessons, teachers are encouraging pupils to practise their number skills in other subjects, for example physical education (PE).

- Teachers have checked pupils' knowledge across all subjects to see what they can remember. Staff are using this information to adjust their teaching to make sure that any gaps can be filled.
- Teachers are developing ways of delivering remote learning, should this be needed in the future. Your plans include developing learning online using a blend of live lessons and assemblies led by school staff, together with links to virtual lessons and other resources.

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 Hampshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Newberry
Her Majesty's Inspector