

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Claire Smyth
Headteacher
Beckers Green Primary School
Beckers Green Road
Braintree
Essex
CM7 3PR

Dear Mrs Smyth

Ofsted visit to Beckers Green Primary School

Following my visit with Isabel Davis, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 13 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, the attendance support officer, the business manager, a member of your administrative support team, the leader for English and the mathematics leader. 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 pupils on 2 September 2020. Pupils in Reception attended part time for the first two days of term, as part of their phased introduction to their new school. Along with other pupils, they began attending full time from 7 September 2020.
- Pupils' attendance is similar to attendance at the same time last year.
- Pupils are studying the usual range of subjects. However, the time spent on some subjects such as music, religious education and modern foreign languages has reduced because you have decided to focus more on reading, writing and mathematics. You expect to return to the usual curriculum in the summer term of 2021.
- Staff have used a combination of tests, quizzes and teachers' checks in lessons to identify where pupils are in their learning. They have noticed that pupils have lost some ground in their knowledge of phonics, in their reading fluency, in writing and in some areas of mathematics.
- Leaders have decided to recap phonics learning for pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, to ensure pupils have the knowledge they need to make a good start in reading. You are trying to encourage pupils to re-establish habits of regular reading at home and at school, including by providing books online.
- Pupils are having additional lessons in grammar, punctuation and handwriting. This is to improve the content and presentation of their writing.

- In mathematics, teachers are giving pupils opportunities to make sure they learn their times tables and to cover areas such as fractions, that they missed when learning at home.
- Some of the learning that usually takes place in the autumn term has been moved to later in the academic year. This includes in physical education, where pupils are learning skills in athletics rather than in team games. In music, pupils are learning about composition rather than performance.
- You have plans to build on the remote learning systems that have been developed since March 2020. You plan to use pre-recorded lessons to enhance digital learning, as well as providing home learning packs as you did during the partial closure of the school.

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 board of trustees, and the chief executive officer of Saffron Multi Academy Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Essex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Winter
Her Majesty's Inspector