

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



4 November 2020

Alex Evans
Headteacher
Pixmore Junior School
Rushby Mead
Letchworth
Hertfordshire
SG6 1RS

Dear Mrs Evans

Ofsted visit to Pixmore Junior School

Following my visit with Katherine Douglas, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 6 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 assistant headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding leader, and the family support worker. Following your request, I also held a telephone conversation with the chair of the governing body. 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:

- On 3 September 2020, pupils in Years 3 and 6 returned to school for an induction day. The following day, Years 4 and 5 also returned for their induction. Pupils returned to a more typical full-time timetable on 7 September 2020.
- Attendance has been slightly lower than is usual for this time of year. Almost all pupils returned to school by 7 September 2020. Pupils' attendance has been somewhat affected by seasonal colds. Some parents have made requests for COVID-19 tests to be carried out, although there had been no confirmed cases up to the time of this visit.
- Pupils are being taught all subjects in the curriculum. There have been changes in the order of what pupils learn, but all of the planned curriculum content will eventually be taught within the academic year. For example, due to the restricted access to resources, the delivery of the computing curriculum is having to be re-considered.
- During the period when schools were only open to some children due to COVID-19 restrictions, pupils' remote learning continued to include all

subjects. Leaders feel confident that the curriculum that was in place prior to COVID-19 is being taught.

- Teachers' assessments of pupils' reading are showing that some pupils have developed gaps in their reading for understanding. Teachers are providing additional support to those pupils.
- To help pupils catch up in mathematics, teachers are using their mathematics 'clinics' and are focusing on pupils' fluency with multiplication tables.
- Leaders feel that they are finding new opportunities to keep learning interesting for pupils during this time. They have plans in place to continue to offer this way of learning should they need to deliver teaching remotely.

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

Yours sincerely

Tracy Fielding
Her Majesty's Inspector