

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Ruth Lee
Headteacher
Orchid Vale Primary School
Torun Way
Haydon End
Swindon
Wiltshire
SN25 1UG

Dear Mrs Lee

Ofsted visit to Orchid Vale Primary School

Following my visit with Dale Burr, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 12 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, your two deputy headteachers, the leader for special educational needs and/or disabilities, and senior leaders who are 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 reopened to pupils in Years 1 to 6 on 2 September 2020. Children in Reception started school full time on 21 September 2020. Children in Nursery can attend all their sessions. A few pupils attend part time.
- Pupils' attendance this term is in line with the school's normal attendance for this time of year.
- In September, staff checked pupils' starting points in reading, writing, and mathematics. Teachers are adapting their plans to address gaps in pupils' knowledge. All pupils are having extra lessons in English and mathematics.
- In some subjects, leaders are making temporary adjustments to the order or depth of knowledge pupils are studying. Some subject lessons are shorter than usual.
- Leaders are prioritising pupils' social, physical, and mental health. In the short term, physical education lessons are taking place outside. In class, there are socially distanced activities, such as 'yoga' and 'sitting dance'.
- In Nursery, staff are concentrating on developing children's speaking.
- Leaders are prioritising reading and writing. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are having extra lessons in phonics and pencil control. Teachers in Years 4 to 6 are focusing on widening pupils' vocabulary, and helping pupils write more.
- In mathematics, staff are prioritising number work and pupils using the correct mathematical vocabulary.

- You are training staff and pupils to make use of new online learning platforms. You have plans in place for pupils who are self-isolating to access the same curriculum content as their classmates. You are streaming whole-school assemblies to each classroom live.

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, chair of the board of trustees, and the chief executive officer of The Park Academies Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Swindon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Julie Carrington
Her Majesty's Inspector