

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



17 November 2020

Frances Stephenson
Headteacher
All Saints' Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School
Kitswell Road
Lanchester
County Durham
DH7 0JG

Dear Mrs Stephenson

Ofsted visit to All Saints' Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Following my visit with Carl Sugden, Seconded Inspector, to your school on 20 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, senior leaders and a subject 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, Her Majesty's Inspectors (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 all pupils on 7 September 2020. All pupils are expected to attend full time.
- Attendance levels are above those seen at the same time last year.
- Pupils are following the subjects in the school's usual curriculum. Teachers are adapting how they teach practical activities in subjects such as physical education, music and computing.
- Teachers are using assessment to check pupils' phonics knowledge. You explained that teachers have identified areas where pupils' phonics knowledge is less secure than it was previously. Teachers are providing extra support for pupils who need to catch up.
- In mathematics, leaders are focusing on areas such as fractions and negative numbers, where they have noticed some gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- Teachers are providing additional opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills. This includes a renewed focus on spelling and handwriting. This is because you have found that some pupils did not write regularly during the period when schools were only open to some pupils due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- Staff have developed systems to teach the curriculum remotely. Teachers recently used this system to teach Year 6 pupils online when their class 'bubble' was working from home. Teachers also provide pupils with packs of materials to work from at home.

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 Hexham and Newcastle, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Durham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Kirtley
Her Majesty's Inspector