

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



18 November 2020

Genevieve Prayag
Headteacher
St Mary's CofE Primary School
Fowler Road
Islington
London
N1 2EP

Dear Ms Prayag

Ofsted visit to St Mary's CofE Primary School

Following my visit with Bryony Freeman, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 8 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 senior leadership team and the leader 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 opened for all pupils on 7 September 2020, following three days of training for staff. Pupils are expected to attend full time.
- Pupils' levels of attendance are typical for this time of year.
- You have made some changes to the subjects that pupils are studying. In most subjects, teaching builds on prior learning, and is combining what pupils would usually be learning along with any knowledge that they have missed over the last six months. Some changes have been made to the teaching of physical education, for instance, pupils spend more time playing sports outside. You aim to return to the usual curriculum by summer 2021.
- Leaders have found that some pupils have fallen behind in their reading skills. Teachers have checked pupils' phonics knowledge to find out which sounds pupils cannot readily recall. They have introduced support for pupils to practise these sounds.
- Teachers have identified that pupils are finding it hard to remember important mathematical facts such as multiplication tables. Pupils are also not as confident in using their mathematical knowledge to solve problems. To help pupils catch up, teachers have amended their planning to give these areas more emphasis in daily mathematics lessons.
- In other subjects, teachers have reviewed what they plan to teach. Their aim is to ensure that teaching revisits concepts that pupils need to practise.

- Leaders have established plans to develop resources and activities that pupils can access at home, should remote education be necessary.

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

Yours sincerely

Phil Garnham
Her Majesty's Inspector