

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



20 November 2020

Louise Foster  
Headteacher  
Dale Community Primary School  
Porter Road  
Derby  
DE23 6NL

Dear Mrs Foster

### **Ofsted remote visit to Dale Community Primary School**

Following my remote visit with Chris Stevens, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 5 November 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. Following changes to government guidance and the imposition of COVID-19 (coronavirus) lockdown restrictions, we made this visit remotely to reduce pressure on the school.

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 and the deputy headteacher. We did not speak to pupils.

### **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 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 3 September 2020. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 attended full time from this date. Children in the early years attended part time for the first two weeks.
- Attendance is lower than that typically found at this time of the school year. The school's inclusion officers are providing support for pupils who are not attending.
- Pupils are studying the full range of subjects but some elements, such as singing and cooking, are not being taught. You plan to reintroduce these by the end of the spring term.
- Teachers have carried out checks in reading. These checks show that some pupils are not understanding texts as well as they should. You have increased the amount of time that reading is taught, and pupils are getting more help from adults.
- Some pupils have fallen behind in phonics. More phonics lessons are being taught. You have put in place a phonics catch-up programme for pupils in Year 3.
- Checks in mathematics have shown that pupils are not using mental arithmetic as well as they should when solving problems. Teachers are planning extra lessons to practise important mathematical knowledge that pupils have forgotten.

- Teachers check what pupils can remember in other subjects during lessons. Teachers use what they find out to adapt their teaching and to recap knowledge that pupils cannot recall.
- Leaders have put a plan of remote learning online that is linked to what pupils are studying in school. There are plans in place to make sure that teachers communicate regularly with pupils if a 'bubble' has to isolate. You have identified which families need equipment to access online work and are helping them to get this.

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

Yours sincerely

Vic Wilkinson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**