

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Cathy Walsh
Headteacher
Temple Meadow Primary School
Wrights Lane
Cradley Heath
West Midlands
B64 6RH

Dear Ms Walsh

Ofsted remote visit to Temple Meadow Primary School

Following my remote visit with Nicola Harwood, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 12 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 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, the business manager and some members of staff responsible for managing curriculum subjects. 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 (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:

- Since you reopened your school on 3 September 2020, one year-group 'bubble' has been sent home once to self-isolate because of COVID-19. There are currently no bubbles, individual pupils or families self-isolating from school.
- Attendance rates are currently lower compared with the same time last year. You have established a 'pop-up' office for parents, outside the school building, which you have found to be a popular meeting point. This enables you to keep in touch with families. You have seen some improved attendance and you believe that parents are increasingly having the confidence to return their children to school.
- Pupils are studying all their usual subjects. Science, physical education and music lessons have been adapted to make sure that resources are kept clean and hygienic. Prior to reopening the school, you and your staff planned what you call a 'recovery curriculum'. This was a four-week plan which started in September to help pupils to catch up on the learning they missed during the previous school closure.
- Subject leaders told us that teachers have used what you call 'learning ladders' to assess how much learning pupils have missed or forgotten. The outcomes of these assessments show that, in writing, pupils fell behind in their use of grammar, punctuation and spelling. Younger pupils from Year 1 through to Year 4 also slipped back in terms of their knowledge of phonics when reading new or unfamiliar words.

- In mathematics, teachers noticed learning gaps in topics relating to time and fractions in Year 3 through to Year 6. Another focus was on pupils relearning their times tables, because they missed opportunities to practise number skills when not in school. In science lessons, teachers have adapted new topics to include any learning that pupils missed previously.
- Home-learning resources are on your school's website. These combine online and paper-based resources for pupils to use when not in school. Teachers also created video links for some subjects, for example in science. Families who have children in the Nursery or Reception classes access your school's online assessment and communication tool. This is a familiar platform that has been used for some time. Staff have prepared more online lessons and resources in case of any future need for pupils to self-isolate.

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

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou
Her Majesty's Inspector