

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Anne Schwodler
Headteacher
Marlborough St Mary's Church of England Primary School
Ducks Meadow
Marlborough
Wiltshire
SN8 4BX

Dear Mrs Schwodler

Ofsted remote visit to Marlborough St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Following my remote visit with Paul Williams, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 19 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:

- Approximately one third of pupils have had to work from home since the start of term. For many pupils this was for one or two days while waiting for COVID-19 test results.
- Pupils study the school's full curriculum. However, you have noticed from teachers' assessments that some pupils have missed learning due to COVID-19. These pupils are having catch-up sessions. Leaders expect all pupils will return to their usual curriculum by summer 2021.
- Teachers' assessments show that some pupils have gaps in their English and mathematics knowledge. Staff have planned additional learning support for these pupils.
- Some younger pupils have gaps in their phonic knowledge. These pupils have extra help to learn and remember their letters and sounds. Staff are paying close attention to match pupils' reading books to their early reading starting points.
- All pupils now read daily. A few pupils have one-to-one reading sessions to develop their comprehension skills. Teachers encourage pupils to practise exploring text and answering related questions.

- You have noticed that since pupils have returned to school, many need help remembering number facts and answering mathematical questions. Teachers are providing these pupils with additional help.
- Staff are planning more outdoor learning across all subject areas of the curriculum. For example, in history, Year 3 pupils explored how houses were built during the stone age using sticks and mud.
- Leaders provide remote education online, by using email, the school website or by sending paper copies home. Teachers prepare videos and send links to educational websites to help pupils' learning. Pupils can use the school's phonics and times-table programmes at home.
- When pupils have had to study at home, teachers have streamed some live lessons. For instance, when Year 5 pupils took part in a virtual Viking visit, some accessed this from their homes while others were in school.

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

Yours sincerely

Marie Thomas
Her Majesty's Inspector