

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



9 December 2020

Joanne Roach
Headteacher
Wattville Primary School
Wattville Road
Handsworth
Birmingham
West Midlands
B21 0DP

Dear Mrs Roach

Ofsted remote visit to Wattville Primary School

Following my remote visit with Deb Jenkins, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 24 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, the deputy headteacher, members of your leadership team, the special educational needs coordinator, phase leaders and subject leaders for history, physical education (PE) and personal, social and health education (PSHE). 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:

- Since the start of term, approximately one quarter of your pupils have had to self-isolate at some point. At the time of the remote visit, a 'bubble' in Year 6 was self-isolating.
- You told us that you have made some changes to your normal curriculum. For example, modern foreign languages, swimming and some music lessons are currently not being taught. You said that you have made this decision to have more time to focus on the teaching of English and mathematics. You are aiming to return to your full curriculum by the summer term 2021.
- Teachers have checked what pupils know and can do. Teachers have made adaptations to the order in which topics within the curriculum are being taught. For example, in PE, team games have been held back until later in the academic year and most PE lessons are taking place outside. In English, you have identified that pupils' phonic knowledge has been negatively affected. You stated that there are now more phonics lessons taking place for pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3. You say that more pupils now need help to improve their reading and some pupils find writing at length challenging.

- You are focusing more on pupils' mental health and well-being. To that end, you have extended your PSHE curriculum to include a mental health aspect. You explained that the PSHE curriculum is now embedded in your curriculum through a variety of cross-curricular themes. You stated that this decision was made to make sure that pupils feel safe and confident and ready to learn.
- You have a system in place for delivering remote learning. This system is a blended approach of paper-based work packs and some online resources that pupils can access from home. You explained that not all pupils have the technology needed to access work online and you are in the process of providing additional technology for pupils to use at home. You said that you and your staff continue to develop the way in which you provide remote learning for pupils who have to learn from 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 regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Birmingham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Bianka Zemke
Her Majesty's Inspector