

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



10 December 2020

Andrew Palmer
Headteacher
Heycroft Primary School
Benvenue Avenue
Eastwood
Leigh-on-Sea
Essex
SS9 5SJ

Dear Mr Palmer

Ofsted remote visit to Heycroft Primary School

Following my remote visit with Charlie Fordham, 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, the deputy headteacher, the inclusion manager and the leaders of early years and reading, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). 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 the autumn term, a small number of pupils have been self-isolating and have had to learn remotely from home.
- Pupils are studying their usual range of subjects. Some content that would normally be taught during the autumn term has been moved to be taught later in the year. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are not currently singing in their music lessons.
- Teachers have checked how well pupils are reading. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have gaps in their knowledge of phonics. Teachers are re-visiting phonics learning from the previous academic year to help pupils catch up.
- Teachers have focused on identifying pupils' knowledge and understanding in mathematics. Year 6 pupils recall how to calculate, but they have not all remembered how to use their calculation skills when they are solving problems. Teachers are delivering additional lessons to help rebuild pupils' knowledge and confidence in this area of mathematics.

- In the wider curriculum, teachers are recapping areas where pupils' knowledge and understanding are less secure. In some subjects, teachers are teaching some of the knowledge that was due to be taught in the summer term 2020. For example, in geography, teachers are focusing on map-reading skills as pupils did not learn this while they were learning at home.
- Early years staff have noticed that children's speaking skills and ability to play are not where they typically would be for Reception children at this time of year. Teachers are planning more opportunities for children to speak and play together in their day-to-day activities.
- Pupils who are self-isolating follow a timetable of lessons and access learning via the school's website. Leaders have plans in place should they need to deliver the planned curriculum for all subjects remotely to a class 'bubble'.

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 Southend-on-Sea. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Liz Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector