

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Cassandra Palmer
Headteacher
Bourne Primary School
Melbourne Road
Eastbourne
East Sussex
BN22 8BD

Dear Mrs Palmer

Ofsted remote visit to Bourne Primary School

Following my remote visit with Yasmin Maskatiya, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 26 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 your senior leadership team. 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:

- At the time of the remote visit, all children in Nursery and Reception were isolating. Since the start of term, over two fifths of all pupils have had to learn from home. For some pupils, this has only been for a small number of days.
- Pupils are studying their usual range of subjects. However, units of work have been re-sequenced in physical education (PE) to give all 'pods' the space they need to participate in the PE curriculum. Leaders have added additional outdoor learning and performing arts (music, art and drama) to the timetable for each class.
- Staff have assessed the reading comprehension of pupils in Years 2 to 6. Younger children have been assessed in phonics. Pupils in some year groups have fallen further behind than others. Leaders have increased support staff in those year groups, and in Year 6 have allocated three teachers to two classes.
- In mathematics, staff checked pupils' new starting points at the beginning of the year. Teachers found that pupils were not as quick and accurate with their mathematics as they had been previously. Leaders told us that teaching has been focused on number, place value, and calculation to address this. Staff check pupils' understanding of the basics of mathematics in each lesson before moving on to new topics.
- In the wider curriculum, staff have checked what pupils remembered. It has been identified that pupils have gaps in their subject specific vocabulary. In response, staff are focusing on reading and discussion across the curriculum.

- In Reception, children have needed more support for personal, social and emotional development than in previous years. Children also have lower starting points in communication and language than usual. More pupils are being referred for additional support with their speech and language this year.
- For remote learning, leaders have prioritised using systems that parents and pupils are familiar with. All pupils, including children in early years, have been provided with a sketchbook and other basic resources to use at home. Children in Nursery and Reception receive a weekly set of activities, which includes phonics and mathematics. Older pupils have a more structured timetable.

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 East Sussex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Alice Roberts
Her Majesty's Inspector