

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



17 December 2020

Anthony Silk
Headteacher
Harcourt Primary School
Biggins Wood Road
Folkestone
Kent
CT19 4NE

Dear Mr Silk

Ofsted remote visit to Harcourt Primary School

Following my remote visit with Frances Nation, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 17 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, your deputy headteacher, the special educational needs co-ordinator and the reading leader. 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 sixth of pupils have had to work from home at some point since September, while they have been self-isolating or waiting for a test. No year group 'bubbles' have been sent home.
- Pupils are studying their usual range of subjects. In Year 1, the approach to teaching has been revised to include aspects of the early years foundation stage curriculum that were missed. You expect Year 1 pupils to return to their usual curriculum at the beginning of 2021.
- You prioritised pupils' well-being and personal, social and health education in the first three weeks of term. Teachers began to informally assess pupils' new starting points after they had this time to settle back in to school.
- Most pupils had limited opportunities to rehearse and practise their phonics or to read widely during lockdown. You increased the time allocated to teaching phonics, so that pupils had two daily sessions. Teachers also listened to every pupil read individually and you said that this has helped pupils to catch up.
- In mathematics, the published scheme you use has been adapted to cover topics that were missed during the summer. Your assessments show that pupils do not have as much missed learning to catch up in mathematics. However, you have noticed that Year 2 pupils still rely on practical equipment to help with their calculations and Year 6 pupils have gaps in their reasoning skills.

- You have recognised that many pupils have lost their stamina to write at length and have also fallen behind in their spelling skills. You are providing daily opportunities for pupils to write in a range of situations and subjects.
- When individual pupils have had to work remotely, you have provided work in English, mathematics and one other subject. You recognise that not all of your families have reliable internet access and cannot access the online resources you have used. You have plans to enhance the remote education you provide should you need to send any class 'bubbles' 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 Kent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lee Selby
Her Majesty's Inspector