

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



17 December 2020

Deborah Ainscoe
Headteacher
Old Hall Primary School
Springside View
Bury
Lancashire
BL8 4LU

Dear Mrs Ainscoe

Ofsted remote visit to Old Hall Primary School

Following my remote visit with Tim Vaughan, 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 and the assistant headteachers. 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 (coronavirus) 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 pupils have spent some time working at home.
- All pupils are studying their usual range of subjects, but teachers have changed their planning to account for pupils' missed learning in the summer term 2020. You also told us that some subject content is not being taught. For example, pupils are not singing as part of your music curriculum. You intend to return to your usual curriculum before summer 2021.
- Teachers have identified that, when reading, some pupils are not as able to sustain their concentration as well as they did in the past. Pupils are also finding it harder to answer questions about their reading. You are providing additional support to help pupils develop their reading stamina and comprehension skills.
- Teachers' checks in mathematics show that pupils have not remembered the reasoning and problem-solving skills that they were taught up to March 2020. You are using some of the additional government funding to provide pupils with extra opportunities to practise these skills.
- Teachers have identified gaps in pupils' knowledge in subjects other than English and mathematics, due to the period when schools were only open to some pupils due to COVID-19 restrictions. Subject leaders have started to consider how teaching plans can be changed to allow pupils to catch up with missed subject content.

- You are providing remote education for pupils who need to self-isolate. You plan to provide work in all curriculum areas for any whole-class 'bubbles' who may need to isolate in the future. Where individual children are self-isolating, you are providing paper-based work and have purchased additional computers and workbooks to support pupils' learning at 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 Bury. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Adam Sproston
Her Majesty's Inspector