

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Amanda Copper
Headteacher
Wimbish Primary School
Tye Green
Wimbish
Saffron Walden
Essex
CB10 2XE

Dear Mrs Copper

Ofsted visit to Wimbish Primary School

Following my visit with Damian Loneragan, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 3 December 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.

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 senior leadership team and the senior leader responsible for safeguarding. We did not speak to pupils because of the protective measures in place.

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:

- A very small number of individual pupils have had to learn from home since the start of term. No class 'bubbles' have needed to isolate since the beginning of term.
- During the first half term of this year you decided to prioritise the teaching of mathematics and English. You initially decided not to teach French and computing. However, these subjects are now being taught with a focus on revisiting basic knowledge and skills, particularly in computing. All of your usual subjects are now being taught with the aim of returning to the usual curriculum by summer term 2021.
- Teachers' assessments showed that pupils were less confident in reading and needed additional support with their vocabulary. For younger pupils, you now teach additional phonics sessions, and older pupils receive extra small-group reading support, to help them catch up.
- In September 2020, you carried out assessments in mathematics. This information showed you that pupils could not remember basic knowledge and mathematics vocabulary that they had been taught earlier in the year.

You have now reorganised mathematics lessons so that pupils can revisit areas where gaps have developed.

- The wider curriculum is now broadly in place. However, pupils are not having swimming lessons, and in music they have listened to and learned the words to songs rather than participating in your usual whole-school singing sessions.
- In Reception, you have spent more time teaching children to be secure with basic letter sounds before moving on to other reading strategies. You have also adapted the curriculum to spend more time on developing the children's self-help skills.
- When pupils have been isolating, teachers have liaised directly with families and matched learning to the curriculum in school. If a bubble was required to stay at home, you have a remote education curriculum in place that is easy for pupils to access.

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 Essex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

David Milligan
Her Majesty's Inspector