

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



6 January 2021

Katie Blood
Headteacher
St Bartholomew's CofE Primary School
Ann Street
Brighton
East Sussex
BN1 4GP

Dear Ms Blood

Ofsted remote visit to St Bartholomew's CofE Primary School

Following my remote visit to your school on 9 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. I did not undertake the usual range of inspection activities and was 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, I spoke to you and members of your senior leadership team. I 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. I 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.

I 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, the inspector noted that:

- Since September, five out of the seven class 'bubbles' have had to self-isolate and learn from home for up to 14 days. This amounts to approximately two thirds of the school.
- By the summer term 2021, pupils will have studied all the planned subject areas in the school's new curriculum. In physical education, pupils are not able to go swimming because the local pool is closed to school groups until further notice.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 6 have been assessed in reading, writing and mathematics. These checks focused on what pupils should have learned last year.
- Staff report that some pupils have lost confidence in mathematics, particularly when solving fractions.
- Leaders have identified that pupils need more practice in writing complex sentences and that their understanding of what they read is weaker than it was before the period when schools were only open to some children due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- Pupils have daily 'reboot' sessions to practise reading, writing and mathematics skills. Leaders have purchased new sets of books, including some suitable for pupils at an early stage of reading independently.
- Teachers plan to give pupils support with specific skills at the beginning of topics in the wider curriculum, including, for example, the use of tools and

materials in design and technology.

- Leaders note that Reception-age children need support with playing together and taking turns. Some have not had enough experience of speaking and listening before joining the school.
- Over the autumn term, leaders have developed an online programme of recorded lessons that pupils can access from most devices. The materials are based on what pupils would be studying if they were in school. Some class bubbles have followed the programme when they have been learning from home, and others have completed print-based activities, while the programme is being developed.

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 director of education for the Diocese of Chichester, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Brighton and Hove. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Janet Pearce
Her Majesty's Inspector