

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Rosemary Burke
Acting Headteacher
St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School
Bowerham Road
Lancaster
Lancashire
LA1 4HT

Dear Miss Burke

Ofsted remote visit to St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Following my remote visit with Julie Barlow, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 10 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. 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:

- Since the start of term, around one pupil in every 10 has had to self-isolate and learn from home for a short period of time due to COVID-19.
- Although pupils are studying the usual range of subjects, some aspects of the music and physical education curriculums are not currently being taught. You are planning for pupils to return to the school's full curriculum by the summer term 2021.
- Teachers' checks on pupils' reading showed that many younger pupils were behind in their knowledge of phonics, and that some older pupils had fallen out of the habit of reading regularly. Staff are providing extra support to help pupils to catch up in phonics. You have also purchased a range of non-fiction books in order to encourage older pupils to read more often and more widely.
- Teachers have carried out checks in mathematics to gauge the impact of the COVID-19 restrictions on pupils' knowledge. You told us that pupils are doing well in this subject and that most pupils have not fallen behind in their learning. You believe that teachers and parents worked well together to support pupils' learning in mathematics.
- The disruption caused by the COVID-19 restrictions led to some subjects not being taught during the summer term. As each subject has been introduced back into the school's curriculum, teachers have been checking what pupils can recall. This is helping teachers to identify which aspects of each subject need to be revisited in order to close the gaps in pupils' learning.

- You provide work for pupils who have to learn from home. You are using a combination of online and paper-based resources to ensure that these pupils continue their learning in all curriculum subjects.

Thank you again for contributing to this important national work. The views and experiences you 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 Lancaster, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Lancashire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Paul Tomkow
Her Majesty's Inspector