

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



14 December 2020

Emma Charlton
Headteacher
Harefield Primary School
Yeovil Chase
Southampton
SO18 5NZ

Dear Ms Charlton

Ofsted remote visit to Harefield Primary School

Following my remote visit with Laurie Anderson, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 1 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. 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 members of the senior leadership team, including the senior leader responsible for safeguarding. 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 September 2020, almost a third of pupils, including one class in the Year 4 'bubble', have had to self-isolate and work from home for a short period of time.
- Pupils are not studying music, geography, history, religious education or their full computing curriculum. They have spent more time on personal, social, and health education and the online safety elements of computing to support pupils' emotional and personal development and their safety when working online. Leaders aim for pupils to return to their usual curriculum by summer 2021.
- Teachers used formal assessments to check pupils' new starting points in phonics, reading and mathematics and found that many pupils have fallen behind. For example, in phonics Year 2 pupils have forgotten some sounds and how to blend them. Teachers have changed lesson plans to revisit learning that pupils have forgotten and to add learning that they have missed.
- In English, pupils' handwriting and spelling skills have declined. Leaders have purchased a new handwriting scheme for the whole school to follow. They have also focused on improving pupils' dexterity during art lessons to support handwriting.
- Teachers found that pupils have forgotten their knowledge of fractions, measures and calculations. Teachers have changed their approach to mathematics lessons so that they include more time to recap knowledge.

- Children in Reception Year have spent more time learning to develop their coordination and control when moving, along with a greater emphasis on building their communication and language skills.
- If pupils have to work from home, they go online to access the same work as their class are doing in school, or were due to do. A member of staff is available online if they get stuck and need help during the day. Pupils upload their work for their teacher to see and comment on at the end of each day.

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 board of trustees and the chief executive officer of Hamwic Education Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Southampton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lucy English
Her Majesty's Inspector