

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Louise Sennett
Headteacher
St Helen's CE Primary School
Highfield Road
Hemsworth
West Yorkshire
WF9 4EG

Dear Mrs Sennett

Ofsted remote visit to St Helen's CE Primary School

Following my remote visit with Michele Costello, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 24 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 with you, the senior leadership team and leaders 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:

- On the date prior to our visit, you had partially closed a Year 6 'bubble' due to COVID-19. Since the start of term, around one third of pupils have had to work from home at some point.
- Although pupils continue to study the usual range of subjects, you told us that you have adapted curriculum plans in some subjects. For instance, you have delayed swimming lessons until later in the year due to restrictions at your local pool. You aim to return pupils to your usual curriculum by summer 2021.
- In reading, teachers have identified gaps in pupils' learning. You told us that pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 have gaps in their phonics knowledge, while older pupils have lost skills in reading comprehension. You explained that pupils are being supported to catch up in these areas.
- Teachers have checked pupils' new starting points in mathematics. You explained that teachers have found that there are gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding of number formation, and mental and written arithmetic. You explained that because of this, pupils are being enabled to catch up both in class and through additional interventions.
- In other subjects from the wider curriculum, such as history and physical education, you intend to ask teachers to check for any lost learning later in the school year.
- Pupils who are self-isolating access the school's curriculum remotely using paper-based and digital methods. You explained that this remote education

mirrors what is taught in class. You told us that shortly you will be supporting families by lending computers and data SIM cards, if required.

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 and the chief executive officer of the Enhance multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Leeds, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Wakefield. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Marcus Newby
Her Majesty's Inspector