

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



3 December 2020

Jude Gibbon
Headteacher
Ghyllgrove Primary School
The Gore
Basildon
Essex
SS14 2BG

Dear Mrs Gibbon

Ofsted remote visit to Ghyllgrove Primary School

Following my remote visit with Andrew Hemmings, 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, the two deputy headteachers, the senior leader responsible for safeguarding and for the special educational needs provision. 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 beginning of the autumn term, a small number of pupils have had to self-isolate. These pupils learned remotely from home.
- Pupils are studying their normal range of subjects. Teachers are delivering the practical tasks for some subjects differently than they usually would. In Nursery, singing is continuing outside. In all other year groups, singing will be taught later in the school year.
- The school has a resource base for deaf pupils. The pupils would normally have some lessons in the base and some lessons with their class. Currently, the pupils are either taught in the base full time or in their class full time, depending on the specific support pupils need.
- Teachers are spending more time than they normally would teaching personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. Leaders are giving additional support to pupils' mental health and emotional well-being.
- Teachers have undertaken checks on pupils' reading and writing. Younger pupils are receiving extra phonics teaching each day to help them make up for

lost ground. Older pupils are being given opportunities to regain their stamina by practising reading and writing at greater length.

- From their checks on pupils' knowledge and understanding of mathematics, teachers are prioritising the teaching of number facts and repeating the teaching of the skills pupils need to be able to calculate accurately.
- Where necessary, teachers are re-visiting some learning in other subjects from the summer term. Teachers are changing their planning for topic lessons, taking into account pupils' different starting points.
- Leaders have plans in place to teach pupils remotely if they are unable to attend school for a period of time in the future. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are currently doing homework tasks online. If pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have to stay at home, they will receive a home learning pack prepared for each individual pupil's needs.

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

Liz Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector