

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



4 December 2020

Rebecca Butler
Headteacher
Dothill Primary School
Severn Drive
Wellington
Telford
Shropshire
TF1 3JB

Dear Mrs Butler

Ofsted remote visit to Dothill Primary School

Following my remote visit with Lesley Yates, 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 to the acting deputy headteacher, who is also the senior leader responsible for safeguarding, and the subject leaders for English, mathematics, history and physical education (PE). 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:

- At the time of the visit, no 'bubbles' were self-isolating. Since September, approximately a quarter of the pupils have had to work from home at some point.
- At the start of the autumn term, leaders introduced a two-week focus on well-being, to help pupils get used to being back in school. All pupils are now studying the full range of subjects. Leaders and teachers have reordered some parts of the PE curriculum, such as football, so that these are taught later in the school year.
- Teachers say that pupils are finding some aspects of English more difficult than before the lockdown. For example, pupils have fallen out of the habit of writing regularly.
- Teachers have carried out checks on pupils' phonics knowledge. They have adjusted phonics teaching, from Year 1 to Year 3, to help pupils revise the trickier sounds. Teachers in Years 4 to 6 are focusing on developing pupils' grammar skills.

- In mathematics, leaders have found that pupils have remembered their number facts and times tables, but they are not as confident when applying these when solving problems. Staff are introducing new content more slowly and giving pupils extra time to revisit and consolidate previous learning.
- Teachers are delivering the school's usual curriculum. Leaders say it is not currently possible to include the typical educational visits or the full range of extra-curricular clubs. You are considering alternative ways of providing enrichment.
- Staff are providing remote education to pupils who are currently self-isolating. Leaders are confident about using this approach if more pupils are required to self-isolate or if there are any future local restrictions.

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 Telford and Wrekin. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Eve Morris
Her Majesty's Inspector