

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



25 November 2020

Clare South
Headteacher
Long Marston VA Church of England Primary School
Station Road
Long Marston
Tring
Hertfordshire
HP23 4QS

Dear Mrs South

Ofsted remote visit to Long Marston VA Church of England Primary School

Following my remote visit with Charlie Fordham, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 12 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 and the phase leaders for key stage 1 and key stage 2. 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:

- The school has been open full time for pupils in all year groups since the beginning of the academic year. Very few pupils, and no 'bubbles', have had to work from home so far this term.
- You plan for pupils to return fully to the school's usual curriculum by the summer term 2021. Pupils are currently learning about the usual range of subjects, but you have made some adjustments to what is taught and when.
- Staff assessed pupils' reading at the beginning of the term. You found that, on the whole, pupils' reading ability is similar to what you would normally expect. You have introduced an additional programme to support pupils who have fallen behind in their phonics knowledge.
- In mathematics also, you found pupils' progress to be comparable with previous years. However, pupils are behind in their knowledge of space, shape and measures, because these aspects of mathematics were not taught remotely. You have plans in place to ensure teachers prioritise this missed learning.
- Teachers' assessments of pupils' writing showed you that pupils are now less able to compose longer pieces of work than they would usually be. Many pupils have forgotten some of the punctuation and spelling skills that they

have previously been taught. As a result, teachers are providing pupils with more opportunities to practise their writing skills across a wide range of subjects.

- You have decided to use the resources from an online academy to provide remote education for pupils, when needed. These resources are not aligned with the school's usual curriculum. Should a bubble need to isolate, you intend for teachers to provide online meetings, twice a day, to enable pupils and their parents to ask questions about the work that they have been given to do.

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 director of education for the diocese of St Albans, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hertfordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Varney
Her Majesty's Inspector