

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



15 October 2020

Peter Law  
Principal  
Comberton Village College  
West Street  
Comberton  
Cambridge  
Cambridgeshire  
CB23 7DU

Dear Mr Law

### **Ofsted visit to Comberton Village College**

Following my visit with Stefanie Lipinski-Barltrop, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 29 September 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.

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 senior leadership team and the senior leader responsible for safeguarding. We did not speak to pupils because of the protective measures in place.

### **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 (coronavirus) 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:**

- You explained that the school opened to all pupils on 10 September 2020, after a phased return during the first week of term. A small number of short-term, part-time programmes are in place for a few pupils who need extra support to return to full-time studies.
- You and your leadership team told inspectors that pupils' attendance is currently below that seen at the same point in the previous year. You feel that this is mainly due to COVID-19-related concerns. Your leaders say that they are communicating with families with the aim of reassuring them that the school's COVID-19 safety arrangements are secure.
- The full range of curriculum subjects was offered to pupils in key stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form from the start of the autumn term. However, your leaders said that the extent to which pupils can access practical activities is limited because of COVID-19 safety arrangements, for example in music, drama and science. You told inspectors that subject teams are reviewing strategies to overcome these concerns and those related to pupils' safe participation in enrichment activities.
- Subject teams are making checks to identify gaps in pupils' learning across key stages, including for students in the sixth form. Your leaders say that this will help teams to understand pupils' new starting points. Your teachers aim to use the information to provide support to help individual pupils to catch up.

- You say that your staff are working to provide a flexible programme of home learning, should it be required. You feel that this can be tailored to pupils' changing needs. You told inspectors that the model is based on the same lesson plans and resources that pupils experience in school.

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 multi-academy trust, the director of education, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cambridgeshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Christine Dick  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**