

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



22 October 2020

David Smith
Headteacher
Smestow School
Windmill Crescent
Castlecroft
Wolverhampton
West Midlands
WV3 8HU

Dear Mr Smith

Ofsted visit to Smestow School

Following my visit with Christopher Stevens, 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 you, members of your senior leadership team and the senior leaders 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:

- The school opened to all pupils on 3 September 2020. Pupils are attending on a full-time basis.
- Pupils' attendance is below the normal figure for this time of the year. You say that this is due to the COVID-19 situation. Leaders are working with families and outside agencies to improve attendance.
- Pupils in all year groups are studying their normal range of subjects. You have changed the allocated teaching time for some subjects. For example, pupils in all year groups are now spending more time studying English than previously. You plan to return to the normal timetable allocations for all subjects by the end of this academic year.
- Teachers have started to check Year 7 pupils' starting points. You intend to formally assess pupils in other year groups in the coming weeks. Teachers have focused on supporting pupils in their return to full-time schooling, and in getting comfortable with the new routines in place since the start of term.
- You have a system in place to deliver the school's curriculum remotely to all year groups should this be needed.

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 board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Wolverhampton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Bianka Zemke
Her Majesty's Inspector