

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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



5 November 2020

Karen Headland  
Headteacher  
Cotton End Forest School  
High Road  
Cotton End  
Bedford  
Bedfordshire  
MK45 3AG

Dear Mrs Headland

### **Ofsted visit to Cotton End Forest School**

Following my visit with Paul Wilson, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 15 October 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, the senior leadership team, the family support worker and 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 in Years 1 to 6 on 7 September 2020. Children joining Reception started the following week. This was so that staff could carry out home visits for children who were new to the school, which staff had been unable to carry out in July.
- Pupils' attendance is as you would normally expect at this time of year.
- Pupils are learning their usual range of subjects. This includes all outdoor learning for pupils that is a main feature of the school's chosen curriculum. All subject leaders are finding ways to include any subject content that pupils missed during the summer term.
- Teachers have checked pupils' new starting points in reading, writing and mathematics since they returned to school in September 2020. This is helping teachers to identify what pupils know and remember and to plan the support pupils need to catch up.
- You are using your checks to plan for the gaps identified in pupils' phonics knowledge. You are teaching additional phonics lessons in Year 3 to cover learning that pupils have missed.
- Leaders have identified that pupils have fallen behind in mathematics. Teachers are focusing on helping pupils to secure their knowledge of calculating, to help pupils catch up.
- You are keen to broaden pupils' understanding of cultural diversity. This has been prompted by discussions with pupils and staff on the impact of COVID-19 on different communities. You have bought new texts to support this.

- You have planned a programme of remote learning for all subjects that outlines how you would continue to deliver the curriculum, should this be needed in the future.

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 Bedfordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Katherine Douglas  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**