

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mark Smith
Headteacher
Paignton Academy
Waterleat Road
Paignton
Devon
TQ3 3WA

Dear Mr Smith

Ofsted visit to Paignton Academy

Following my visit with Lydia Pride, 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. 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 fully to all pupils on 7 September 2020. The majority of pupils are attending full time, with a small number following bespoke part-time timetables.
- Attendance is below what is normal for the school at this time of year. The school has communicated attendance expectations widely to parents. The attendance team is in daily contact with parents where pupil attendance is low to advise, reassure and encourage attendance.
- Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 have returned to their usual curriculum. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are following their full range of examination courses. Leaders are currently adapting curriculum plans to include content missed during the lockdown period.
- Teachers are checking for gaps in pupils' knowledge through the school's usual assessment activities. For example, pupils have completed low-stakes tests and baseline assessments. You have developed a team of teacher mentors who will support pupils you have identified as falling behind. You will continue to check for gaps throughout this term and make adjustments to the curriculum as required.
- Should remote learning be required in the future, you have put systems in place and have trained staff so that it can be aligned to the curriculum followed in school. Teachers will use the remote learning methods tried out during lockdown, which combined live lessons with uploaded activities. A small number of pupils are currently accessing remote learning.

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

Yours sincerely,

Tracey Reynolds
Her Majesty's Inspector