

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Matthew Hardwick
Headteacher
Ulverston Victoria High School
Springfield Road
Ulverston
Cumbria
LA12 0EB

Dear Mr Hardwick

Ofsted visit to Ulverston Victoria High School

Following my visit with Vincent Ashworth, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 8 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 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:

- Different year groups started to return to school from 3 September 2020. The school opened fully to all pupils on 8 September 2020. You expect all pupils, including students in the sixth form, to attend full time.
- Attendance is broadly in line with the school's usual attendance rates for this time of year.
- Pupils in Years 7, 8, and 9 and students in the sixth form have returned to their full timetable of curriculum subjects.
- Pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 continue to study their option subjects. You explained to us that, currently, pupils do not study religious education or physical education. You told us that this is because you have identified that pupils need more time to catch up in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. Your aim is for all pupils and students to return to the school's full curriculum earlier than the summer term 2021.
- You have made changes to the way in which you deliver the curriculum in subjects with practical elements, such as science and design and technology. For example, you explained how teachers demonstrate experiments in science wherever possible so that pupils can maintain social distancing.
- You explained how teachers check what pupils and students have missed or forgotten since March 2020. You told us that teachers use this information to help pupils catch up where needed.
- You have systems in place to deliver the school's curriculum remotely, should this be needed. This includes a combination of digital and paper-based resources that are aligned with the school's curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Linda Emmett
Her Majesty's Inspector