

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



22 October 2020

John Watson
Headteacher
Oulder Hill Community School and Language College
Hudsons Walk
Rochdale
Lancashire
OL11 5EF

Dear Mr Watson

Ofsted visit to Oulder Hill Community School

Following my visit with Linda Emmett, 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 with you and other members of your senior leadership team. We did not speak with 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 7 September 2020. You expect all pupils to attend full time.
- Pupils' attendance is below where it would normally be at this time of year. You told us that staff contact families regularly to encourage and support more pupils to attend school. At the time of this visit, two year-group 'bubbles' in school were isolating: one in Year 9 and a second in Year 11.
- All pupils have returned to their full timetable of subjects. You explained to us how you have adapted your curriculum for all pupils in physical education and science. This is so that practical aspects can be taught safely. You aim for all pupils to return to the full curriculum content by the summer term in 2021.
- In Years 7, 8 and 9, you have adapted the curriculum in food technology. You have also changed the order in which you deliver the art curriculum to allow for specialist equipment to be cleaned. In history, you explained to us how you have prioritised those topics that you consider most difficult for pupils to learn remotely.
- In Years 10 and 11, pupils have continued to study all of their examination subjects. You have adapted the music curriculum for pupils in Years 10 and 11 so that specialist equipment can be used safely. You told us that you have also made changes to the curriculum in geography and English.
- All pupils except those in Year 11 have completed assessments in English, mathematics and science. You explained to us how these assessments will help you to identify what pupils have missed or forgotten during the period when schools were only open to some children due to COVID-19 restrictions.

You told us that teachers in other subjects are checking on pupils' new starting points during lessons.

- You have systems in place to deliver the curriculum remotely for those pupils who are isolating. You informed us that these resources align with the curriculum. You are using a combination of paper-based and digital resources to educate pupils remotely.

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

Yours sincerely

Emma Gregory
Her Majesty's Inspector