

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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



4 November 2020

Michael Laidler  
Headteacher  
Acklam Grange School  
Lodore Grove  
Middlesbrough  
TS5 8PB

Dear Mr Laidler

### **Ofsted visit to Acklam Grange School**

Following my visit with Zoe Lightfoot, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 6 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 chief executive officer, the deputy headteachers (one of whom is the designated safeguarding lead), the assistant headteacher with responsibility for pastoral care and attendance, and the lead assistant headteacher with responsibility for teaching and learning. 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:**

- You opened the school to all pupils on 4 September 2020. Pupils are expected to attend full time.
- Attendance is in line with that before March 2020. Systems are in place to encourage all pupils to attend school. You explained that your pastoral and attendance teams have regular contact with pupils and families when there are concerns about attendance.
- Pupils are studying the full curriculum. They move to specialist classrooms for lessons. There have been no changes to the number of subjects that pupils study. You have altered the school day slightly due to health and safety measures linked to COVID-19.
- Teachers are using activities in lessons to check pupils' knowledge in individual subjects. Curriculum leaders say they have considered subject content and have altered curriculum plans.
- Pupils in Year 7 are being taught in tutor groups until half term. This is partly due to the lack of opportunity for face-to-face transition arrangements before the summer. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 are studying the full range of subjects. They are taught in pathways, as before March 2020.
- There have been no changes in the number of options available to pupils in Years 10 and 11. Leaders have altered curriculum plans, considering the time available before public examinations.

- You have a system of remote learning in place. You explained that this is aligned to the whole-school curriculum and includes both online and printed resources.

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

Yours sincerely

Michael Wardle  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**