

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



10 November 2020

Michael Stoppard
Headteacher
The Hereford Academy
Marlbrook Road
Redhill
Hereford
Herefordshire
HR2 7NG

Dear Mr Stoppard

Ofsted visit to The Hereford Academy

Following my visit with Jane Spilsbury, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 13 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 and members of the senior leadership team, including 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:

- The school opened to all pupils on 3 September 2020. You expect pupils to attend full time.
- You told us that attendance has been very similar to what is normal for this time of year.
- Pupils in all years are currently studying all of their usual subjects. You have made some changes to what is taught in some subjects because of the protective measures you have put in place. For example, pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 do not have access to practical design technology equipment. Pupils in all years do less practical work in science lessons. Pupils in Year 7 have not been able to put on a show for parents as they would usually have done.
- In Year 7, you have completed assessments of what pupils know and understand. You have done this using a combination of externally-marked and internally-produced tests. In all other years, teachers have assessed what pupils know and understand using assessment activities as part of their usual teaching.
- You have identified areas in some subjects where pupils have gaps in their learning. These include pupils' reading comprehension in English and basic arithmetic in mathematics. Similarly, pupils' skills in map-reading in geography and speaking in French have suffered. Teachers are currently addressing these gaps in learning.

- You have developed a system to enable pupils to learn when they are not able to attend school. It is already available to any pupils who are absent from school for any reason. You intend to use this system should pupils have to work from home in the future. Teachers upload resources for every lesson onto the school's online learning system. Pupils can submit work and teachers can provide feedback using the same system.

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 Diocese of Hereford multi-academy trust, the director of education for the diocese of Hereford, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Herefordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Alun Williams
Her Majesty's Inspector