

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
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11 November 2020

Mark Kingswood  
Headteacher  
Fernhill School  
Neville Duke Road  
Farnborough  
Hampshire  
GU14 9BY

Dear Mr Kingswood

### **Ofsted visit to Fernhill School**

Following my visit with Matthew Newberry, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 20 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, members of the senior leadership team, subject leaders of English and mathematics and leaders 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 pupils in Years 7 and 11 on 7 September and to all year groups on 8 September. All pupils are expected to attend full time.
- At the start of the academic year, pupils' attendance was higher than usual. It fell when the Years 9 and 10 year-group 'bubbles' both had to self-isolate and other pupils also stayed off school. Leaders have worked to help parents understand when self-isolation is necessary. At the time of the visit, the Years 9 and 10 pupils had returned, but a large proportion of Year 11 pupils were self-isolating.
- Pupils are studying their usual range of subjects with the exception of computing for Years 7 to 9. These lessons are currently being used for extra mathematics. Leaders aim to return to computing lessons as soon as possible, and by spring 2021 at the latest.
- Teachers have checked what pupils remember in each subject and have changed lessons to re-visit topics where needed. As well as gaps in pupils' knowledge, teachers have found that some pupils have lost confidence. For example, in mathematics some pupils are reluctant to work without a calculator, even when they were able to do this well last year.

- For all pupils, leaders have prioritised topics that are easier to learn when pupils are in the classroom. When year-group bubbles have to self-isolate, teachers change their lessons, and, for example, pupils might not go into the usual depth until they return to the classroom.
- Leaders have trained staff to deliver their lessons online and are sure that pupils have access. When bubbles have to self-isolate, those pupils are taught online. When individual pupils self-isolate, they can join in with their usual lessons because they can listen to the teacher and see the lesson resources online.

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

Yours sincerely

Lucy English  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**