

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



17 November 2020

Ian Tetlow
Headteacher
Higher Lane Primary School
Egerton Road
Whitefield
Manchester
M45 7EX

Dear Mr Tetlow

Ofsted visit to Higher Lane Primary School

Following my visit with Jackie Stillings, 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 chief executive officer for the trust, senior leaders, the parent support adviser and the social, emotional, mental health and well-being practitioner. 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 fully to all pupils on 2 September 2020. All pupils are expected to attend full time.
- Pupils' attendance is the same as it would usually be at this point in the year.
- All pupils are studying the usual range of subjects. You have identified that pupils need to practise their basic skills. As a result, you have adapted the curriculum to accommodate this aspect of learning. You expect that the school's usual curriculum will be fully in place by January 2021.
- Teachers have checked pupils' reading skills. They identified that pupils have had difficulties finding the relevant information in a text, to help them to answer questions about what they have read. You have ensured that there is a whole-school focus on reading for meaning.
- You have also noticed that pupils in Years 1 and 2 have not remembered some of the phonics content that was taught prior to March 2020. Teachers are revisiting these sounds and the letters they represent, so that pupils can recap on what they have forgotten before moving on to new content.
- Teachers' checks in mathematics have shown that pupils' number skills are not as secure as they were. Staff are providing opportunities for pupils to practise and repeat basic number skills, such as recalling multiplication facts.

- In the wider curriculum, teachers are checking pupils' subject knowledge and addressing any gaps in learning as they occur. They are planning topics to engage pupils and to deliver the normal curriculum content.
- You intend to use the systems that you developed in the spring and summer terms, to deliver the curriculum remotely if needed. You explained that teachers have developed their confidence and expertise in these systems and they are presently using them to provide pupils with homework.

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, the chief executive officer of the Vision multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bury. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Steve Bentham
Her Majesty's Inspector