

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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



18 November 2020

Elaine Sargent  
Headteacher  
Appleby Grammar School  
Battlebarrow  
Appleby-in-Westmorland  
Cumbria  
CA16 6XU

Dear Ms Sargent

### **Ofsted visit to Appleby Grammar School**

Following my visit with Naomi Taylor, 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, the assistant headteacher who is also the designated safeguarding lead, the bursar, a pastoral leader and other members of the support staff. 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 pupils and students in Years 7, 10 and 12 on 3 September 2020. Pupils and students in other year groups started on 4 September 2020. All pupils and students are expected to attend full time.
- Pupils' and students' attendance is broadly in line with what it usually is at this time of year.
- All pupils and students are studying the full range of subjects in their usual curriculum.
- Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 stay in the same classroom for most of their lessons. You explained that because of this, teachers have had to change the order of the topics that they teach in some subjects. For example, in music, pupils are developing their listening and compositional skills, rather than performing.
- You told us that teachers are delivering the usual curriculum to pupils in Years 10 and 11 and students in Years 12 and 13. Teachers have made minimal changes to the order in which they teach GCSE and A-level content. Pupils and students in these year groups have full access to specialist classrooms, facilities and resources.
- You explained that teachers use a range of strategies to check what pupils and students know and can remember. Your subject leaders also have plans to complete additional assessments over the next few weeks. You said that you

intend to provide additional time and support for pupils and students who need to catch up.

- You have systems in place to deliver and monitor remote education should pupils need to study at home. You explained the challenges that you face in delivering some subjects remotely, such as physical education. You continue to ensure that your systems for remote learning closely match your usual curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Alyson Middlemass  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**