

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



26 November 2020

Angela Smith
Principal
The Ferrers School
Queensway
Higham Ferrers
Rushden
Northamptonshire
NN10 8LF

Dear Mrs Smith

Ofsted remote visit to The Ferrers School

Following my remote visit with Deborah Mosley, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 10 November 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. Following changes to government guidance and the imposition of COVID-19 (coronavirus) lockdown restrictions, we made this visit remotely to reduce pressure on the school.

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 and other members of staff. We did not speak to pupils.

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 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:

- About 10% of all pupils have needed to isolate, due to COVID-19, at some point since the start of the school year. At the time of the visit pupil 'bubbles' in Years 11, 12 and 13 were isolating at home.
- All pupils are following the school's full range of subjects. Pupils in Years 9 to 13 are studying all their examination courses.
- Leaders have made some changes to the content of some subjects and have prioritised some areas of learning. For example, there has been greater emphasis on emotional well-being in the personal development curriculum.
- Leaders have plans in place to return to the school's usual curriculum, including the 'Session 6' provision, by summer 2021. They are increasing the use of specialist teaching rooms, in safe ways, for more pupils.
- Teachers are checking on pupils' learning in different subjects to see if there are any gaps. Leaders are using standardised tests and assessments in English, mathematics and science for pupils in Years 7 and 8. Staff are beginning to use this information to adapt their curriculum plans.
- Leaders are continuing to develop resources and ways of delivering remote education. This includes a mixture of live online lessons and online resources as well as books and paper-based materials. Pupils who are isolating do the same learning as their peers in school.
- Leaders are planning to provide equipment for some pupils who do not have electronic devices. They are also providing training for teachers to develop remote education further.

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 Cambridge Meridian Academies Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Northamptonshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Chris Davies
Her Majesty's Inspector