

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Paul Cooper
Executive Principal
Lightcliffe Academy
Stoney Lane
Lightcliffe
Halifax
HX3 8TL

Dear Mr Cooper

Ofsted remote visit to Lightcliffe Academy

Following my remote visit with James Duncan, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 19 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 and other senior leaders, including those responsible for safeguarding. 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:

- At the time of our visit, the whole of Year 9 and some classes in Years 10 and 11 were self-isolating. You told us that approximately half of your pupils have needed to work from home for two weeks since September. A quarter of pupils have needed to do this on two separate occasions.
- All pupils are studying their usual range of subjects, although you have made some adaptations to the curriculum. Some catch-up work has been included and you have made some changes to practical work where pupils do not have access to specialist rooms. Leaders explained that you intend to return to your usual curriculum by summer 2021, if not before.
- In Year 7, you have carried out formal assessments in English, mathematics and science and more informal checks in other subjects. You told us that teachers are adapting their plans to cover work that these pupils missed in Year 6 when their primary school was closed. You have also found that many pupils need extra support with their spelling.
- In Years 8 to 11 and in Year 13 you have checked pupils' knowledge and understanding in all subjects. You explained that these checks have shown that a small number of pupils, who have not engaged in remote education, have gaps in their learning. Teachers are adapting their lessons to address these.

- When pupils need to work from home, they are expected to follow their usual timetables by accessing online lessons which are provided daily. These are in a range of formats including some live and recorded lessons. You told us that the main barrier to the success of this system is being able to provide pupils with the technology they need when large numbers of pupils have to work in this way.

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

Yours sincerely

Chris Cook
Her Majesty's Inspector