

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
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Carla Chandler  
Executive Headteacher  
Melrose School  
Church Road  
Mitcham  
CR4 3BE

Dear Mrs Chandler

### **Ofsted remote visit to Melrose School**

Following my remote visit with Lucy Bruce, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 18 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 the senior leadership team. 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:**

- Four classes from different year groups were self-isolating at the time of the visit. Approximately two thirds of pupils have had to work from home at some point since the start of term.
- All pupils are following their usual timetable in the subjects on offer at the school. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 continue to study all their GCSE subjects.
- Off-site activities which pupils do as part of their 'social development opportunities' have been curtailed. These include trips to a local gym, Duke of Edinburgh expeditions and swimming lessons. Leaders plan to return to the full curriculum as soon as possible.
- Teachers checked pupils' new starting points in each subject at the start of term. They found that pupils had regressed in their learning in a range of subjects. Staff have amended personalised targets to reflect the changes to individual learning plans.
- From checks on pupils' English knowledge and skills, staff have identified specific weaknesses in pupils' reading and handwriting. These are now priority areas for all classes.
- Since September, personal, social, health and economic lessons have had a change of focus. Pupils have been learning about how to manage anxiety and develop their resilience. Leaders have also increased pupils' opportunities to exercise.

- Staff provide remote education digitally and prepare paper-based packs of work. Teachers set tasks for pupils at home in each of their timetabled subjects based on what is being taught in school. Staff have an ongoing programme of training 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 governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Merton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jude Wilson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**