

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



10 December 2020

Emma Wilson-Downes
Headteacher
Felixstowe Academy
High Street
Felixstowe
Suffolk
IP11 9QR

Dear Mrs Wilson-Downes

Ofsted remote visit to Felixstowe Academy

Following my remote visit with Damian Loneragan, 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 your team of senior leaders, and two of your designated leaders of 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:

- Most pupils have returned to school. A very small proportion of them are following personalised timetables to help them reintegrate back into full-time learning.
- A significant proportion of individual pupils and a 'bubble' of 60 sixth-form students have, at various stages, had to self-isolate and work from home.
- Pupils are currently studying the usual range of subjects. A very small proportion of pupils have dropped one of their GCSE subjects to help them spend more of their time learning in English and mathematics.
- Leaders aim to return all pupils to the full curriculum, including extra-curricular activities and off-site educational visits, by the summer term 2021.
- In Years 7, 8 and 9, teachers are currently carrying out assessments of pupils' knowledge in all subjects during lessons. These are to inform teachers' planning of learning and assess where further support is needed.
- In Year 11, mock examinations in English and mathematics will take place later this term. These will provide teachers and pupils with an indication of how well pupils are currently doing, and who needs further support. Year 10 pupils are undertaking in-class assessments in all subjects to provide teachers with an overview of how well pupils have returned to learning and where further support is needed.

- In the sixth form, leaders feel that students in Year 13 engaged fully in personal study at home and benefited from returning to school early in June 2020. They also feel that the additional work provided during the summer term for Year 11 pupils intending to join the sixth form has prepared them well for further study in Year 12.
- Staff training in the use of technology to aid remote learning, and additional resources provided for those unable to access the internet, has enabled pupils to continue their learning at home. Plans are in place to develop this further through recording and broadcasting lessons and by supplying pupils with a wider range of computer and paper-based learning.

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

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson
Her Majesty's Inspector