

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



8 December 2020

Sandy Turner
Executive principal
Link Secondary School
Croydon Road
Beddington
CR0 4PD

Dear Mrs Turner

Ofsted remote visit to Link Secondary School

Following my remote visit with Daniel-John Constable, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 24 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 deputy headteachers. 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:

- Approximately one sixth of pupils in this special school have had to work from home at some point since September 2020.
- Pupils in Years 7 to 11 are studying their usual subjects.
- Sixth-form students continue to learn the subjects on offer at the school. Currently, they are unable to access courses at a local college that students usually attend two days per week. Leaders have amended the curriculum so that students use this time to catch up on work that they may have missed.
- At the moment, there are no off-site activities, including horse-riding, football and work placements. 'Project-based' learning activities that involve pupils and students in all year groups have been curtailed this term. Leaders plan to return to the full curriculum as soon as possible.
- Teachers have adjusted curriculum plans this term to include subject content that pupils may have missed during the spring and summer terms 2020. They have also reordered some curriculum content. In science, for example, staff made it a priority for pupils to learn about viruses.
- In September 2020, teachers used a range of strategies to identify pupils' new starting points in all subjects. Staff have amended individual learning plans to address gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills.
- For individual pupils who have to work from home, teachers send paper copies of the work that they would have covered in school. Leaders plan to use a

blended approach if class 'bubbles' have to isolate. This could involve teaching online lessons and/or sending paper-based work home.

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, the chief executive officer of Orchard Hill College Academy Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Sutton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jude Wilson
Her Majesty's Inspector