

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



9 December 2020

Suzie Bourne  
Headteacher  
Witton Middle School  
Old Coach Road  
Droitwich Spa  
Worcestershire  
WR9 8BD

Dear Mrs Bourne

### **Ofsted remote visit to Witton Middle School**

Following my remote visit with Chris Stevens, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 17 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, the senior leadership team and the senior leader 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 the visit, the Year 6 'bubble' was isolating. Since the start of term, over one third of pupils have had to isolate at some point.
- Pupils are studying the usual range of subjects. You have made changes to the order of what is taught in computing, design and technology, and physical education (PE). Additionally, there are now daily opportunities for personal, social and health education sessions to support pupils' well-being. In all subjects, teachers have planned to include missed content in current topics.
- Teachers' checks on pupils' starting points in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 5 to 7 have been used to group pupils in English and mathematics. You have increased the number of sets that you would normally have in each year group.
- Leaders have prioritised reading and have introduced daily reading sessions for all pupils. Each class has a weekly visit from the school librarian, who brings a broad range of books for pupils to choose from.
- Teachers are providing extra opportunities for pupils to write in subjects across the curriculum. This is because you have identified from assessments that some pupils are not remembering to apply their previous knowledge of punctuation when they are writing.

- In mathematics, your assessments have identified gaps in pupils' skills in arithmetic and problem-solving. Pupils in Years 5 to 7 are being given extra time to practise these skills.
- Remote education is delivered through a combination of online resources and live lessons. You provide paper-based materials for the small number of pupils who are unable to access online resources. All subjects are covered except for PE and design and technology. You told us that you align remote education with the school's curriculum as closely as possible and that you adopt the same approach for class bubbles and individual pupils who are isolating.

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 Worcestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jo Evans  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**