

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Claire Byron
Principal
Oakway Academy
Off Oakway
Wellingborough
Northamptonshire
NN8 4SD

Dear Mrs Byron

Ofsted remote visit to Oakway Academy

Following my remote visit with Stephanie Innes-Taylor, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 1 December 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, the senior leader responsible for safeguarding, subject leaders, the attendance officer and the coordinator for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. 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:

- Since the school reopened to all pupils in September 2020, a small number of them have had to work at home for a short period. This includes two year-group 'bubbles' who learned remotely for two weeks.
- All pupils are studying the school's usual range of subjects. However, parts of some subjects will take place later in the year, such as swimming. Leaders plan to resume these parts by summer term 2021.
- In reading, teachers have checked which sounds pupils can remember. More time is being spent practising phonic knowledge in the afternoons. Pupils who need to catch up have extra phonics sessions.
- Teachers have spotted that some pupils have forgotten what they knew previously about punctuation. They have changed what they are teaching so that pupils revisit this learning and practise using it in their writing.
- Teachers' checks in mathematics show that pupils have forgotten some important knowledge. Teachers are making sure that pupils can recall what they learned about place value in the previous year before moving on to new content.

- Teachers make sure that in some subjects, such as computing, pupils use the same programmes at home as at school. They have made sure that pupils are taught how to keep safe online. Pupils know how to upload work that they have done so that the teacher can check it.
- Leaders have provided equipment so that all pupils have what they need when they have to learn from home. Teachers check that pupils can do the work. They provide information for parents and carers, such as how to pronounce the sounds that letters make, so that they can help their children learn.

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 chief executive officer of the Hatton Academies Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Northamptonshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Hazel Henson
Her Majesty's Inspector