

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



4 January 2021

Ian Cooper
Principal
Whiston Willis Primary Academy
Milton Avenue
Whiston
Prescot
Merseyside
L35 2XY

Dear Mr Cooper

Ofsted remote visit to Whiston Willis Primary Academy

Following my remote visit with Pippa Jackson Maitland, 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 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:

- Since the start of term, approximately one third of pupils in the school have spent some time working from home.
- Pupils are studying the usual range of subjects. Teachers have identified the learning that pupils have forgotten or was not taught in the summer term 2020. Teachers have amended their plans for this year to help pupils catch up on any missed learning.
- In reading, teachers have identified the letters and sounds that some younger pupils have forgotten. Additional phonics sessions are being taught to enable these pupils to catch up. Some older pupils have been given extra reading sessions to rekindle their love of reading, as teachers noticed that they are not reading as fluently as they did in the past.
- Teachers have also adapted their plans to include the mathematical content that was not taught in the summer term 2020. Teachers' checks on pupils' learning identified that some younger pupils are not as confident as they were in March 2020 in their number work. Teachers are providing more time for pupils to practise this area of the mathematics curriculum.
- Teachers use a range of online teaching resources to support individual pupils' remote education at home. Pupils complete learning activities that are similar to those completed in school. You told us that teachers check pupils' completion of learning and they provide feedback to pupils after they submit their work.

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 Wade Deacon multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Knowsley. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Simon Hunter
Her Majesty's Inspector