

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



04 January 2021

Lisa Sharman
Principal
Offa's Mead Academy
Beachley Road
Sedbury
Chepstow
NP16 7DT

Dear Mrs Sharman

Ofsted remote visit to Offa's Mead Academy

Following my remote visit with Stewart Gale, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 26 November, 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 senior leaders. 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 there were no class 'bubbles' isolating. A small number of pupils have had to work from home for short periods of time as they were self-isolating.
- Pupils are learning their usual range of subjects but with some modifications in practical subjects, such as music, design technology, science and physical education. You have plans in place to return to the practical aspects of these subjects by summer term 2021.
- Pupils in all year groups have completed assessments in reading, writing and mathematics to identify where they may have gaps in their knowledge. Teachers have used this information to plan the order in which key concepts and knowledge is taught. Teachers provide additional support to help pupils catch up.
- Teachers have undertaken checks to establish where pupils are up to in learning to read. Some pupils in Years 1 to 3 have forgotten aspects of their phonic knowledge. You are providing additional phonic sessions to help these pupils catch up.
- In mathematics, teachers have identified gaps in pupils' knowledge, for example in number and calculation. Teachers are focussing lesson content on number and place value to help pupils catch up.
- In writing, you have found that some pupils have forgotten aspects of spelling, grammar and punctuation. This is especially so in Years 5 and 6. Teachers provide additional teaching time to help pupils practise this area of writing.

- In the wider curriculum you continue to focus on mental health and well-being to give pupils support. You understand that teachers will not be able to cover all the subject content that was missed during the national lockdown. However, teachers are looking to see how these gaps can be covered in future topics.
- The school provided remote learning for all pupils. There was a focus on reading, writing and mathematics alongside aspects of the wider curriculum such as art and physical education.
- You have plans in place to provide online resources should they be required in the future if a bubble, or an individual pupil, needs to work at home. Pupils will have daily work to complete in English and mathematics, with other subjects, for example science, history and languages, also being timetabled. You have given assistance to parents through workshops and clinics to help them support their children with home 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 chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Academies Enterprise Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Gloucestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jen Southall
Her Majesty's Inspector