

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



16 December 2020

Michael McCann
Headteacher
Greenbank School
Greenbank Lane
Hartford
Northwich
Cheshire
CW8 1LD

Dear Mr McCann

Ofsted remote visit to Greenbank School

Following my remote visit with Steve Bentham, 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 and other leaders, including 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:

- Roughly a quarter of all pupils have had to study from home since the start of the autumn term. On average, this has been for just over a week of school time. No large groups of pupils have had to study from home.
- Pupils are studying all their usual subjects. However, teachers have adjusted how teaching is organised in response to the disruption to pupils' learning since March 2020. You expect the curriculum to be back to normal fully by the summer term 2021.
- Staff have used the school's normal assessment systems to check how well pupils know and remember their learning prior to March 2020. In addition, staff have checked pupils' mental health to be able to help pupils participate in learning.
- Teachers are being flexible in how they are teaching pupils in Years 7 to 9 to help them to engage in school. For example, in English, if teachers judge that pupils are losing concentration during their subject learning, they provide alternative activities designed to support pupils' well-being.
- Pupils in Year 11 took their mock examinations earlier than usual and following extra preparation time. This has given teachers information on the knowledge that pupils need to learn.

- Currently, students in Years 12 and 13 are not able to take part in as much learning outside school as usual. For example, you have changed the arrangements for their work experience.
- So far this term, the school's residential provision has only been used for pupils in Years 10 and 11. You hope to offer access to this to other year groups soon.
- You are providing remote education for pupils if they are away from school because of COVID-19. This includes pre-prepared lessons available online, the streaming of some lessons as these are happening, and paper-based materials for any pupils who cannot access the internet.

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 Cheshire West and Chester Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

David Selby
Her Majesty's Inspector