

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



6 January 2021

Joanna Lawrence
Headteacher
The Attic
Hillside Road East
Bungay
Suffolk
NR35 1JS

Dear Mrs Lawrence

Ofsted visit to The Attic

Following my visit with John Mitcheson, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 10 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.

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 the headteacher and deputy headteacher. We did not speak to pupils because of the protective measures in place.

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 (coronavirus) 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:

- The Attic is a pupil referral unit with three sites. At the time of the visit, a class 'bubble' was self-isolating at one site. Since the start of the autumn term, one third of pupils have had to learn from home across all sites.
- Pupils attending The Attic have normally had a disrupted education. Leaders have continued to use the processes they usually would to help support pupils to catch up.
- Almost all pupils have returned to school. Attendance is higher than it was at this time last year.
- Pupils returned to their usual planned curriculum in September 2020. For some pupils, this is a combination of classroom-based learning and learning at home.
- It is usual for teachers to assess pupils starting points in English and mathematics when pupils join the school as they may have gaps in their learning. Teachers also carry out checks on pupils' social and emotional well-being.
- Teachers are using the information from their checks to produce individual plans that aim to help pupils catch up in their learning. Pupils benefit from small classes. Individual pupil lessons are available when needed.

- Staff have recently been trained in teaching phonics to develop younger pupils' reading skills. New reading books have been purchased to encourage older pupils to read more often.
- Off-site educational visits have not taken place this term. Teachers have considered different ways to give pupils similar experiences to those they would have normally. Online visitors and virtual activities are being used to replace the usual enrichment activities.
- Leaders have ensured that every pupil has a computer to use at home. When bubbles of pupils have to isolate, teachers send them an online timetable that is similar to the regular schedule. Additional paper-based learning packs are provided to support pupils' learning at home.

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 management committee, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Suffolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Fyfe Johnston
Her Majesty's Inspector