

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
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10 November 2020

Karen Gleave  
Headteacher  
Brambles Primary Academy  
Kedward Avenue  
Brambles  
Middlesbrough  
Teesside  
TS3 9DB

Dear Ms Gleave

### **Ofsted visit to Brambles Primary Academy**

Following my visit with Jenny Thomas, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 6 October 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 you and your senior leadership team and the designated safeguarding lead. 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 school opened to all pupils on 3 September 2020. Children attending nursery started the following week.
- Pupils' current attendance is below the attendance figures for the same period in the last academic year. Leaders are working closely with the local authority to address this. Attendance and punctuality for many pupils have improved since returning to school in September.
- You told us that pupils are studying most subjects. You have prioritised English, mathematics, art and personal, social and health education. You have plans to offer the usual curriculum in all subjects by the summer term 2021.
- Leaders say that, following COVID-19 restrictions, they have made checks on how well pupils are learning to read. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 are receiving extra catch-up sessions in phonics. You are concentrating on developing pupils' vocabulary and language skills.
- In mathematics, you have made similar checks on what pupils know. You have concentrated on pupils learning about place value and calculation. Pupils are practising what they learn during regular arithmetic sessions.
- Teachers have adjusted their curriculum plans for subjects such as history and art. This is so that pupils can learn the things they missed in the summer term. You have plans to check what pupils know in other curriculum subjects later in the term.
- Leaders say they are already delivering aspects of some curriculum subjects remotely. You have told us that this is linked to the same learning in the classrooms. Teachers are developing remote learning for all subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Alison Aitchison  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**