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Dear Ms Walsh

Ofsted visit to Dormers Wells High School

Following my visit with Nasim Butt, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 29 September 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 senior leadership team and the designated safeguarding lead. We did not speak to pupils because of the protective measures you have 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 7 September 2020. All pupils are attending full time.
- The current attendance rate is slightly lower than normal for this time of year. You told us that some families were initially anxious about sending their children to school. Leaders and staff have maintained regular communication with parents to reassure them.
- A small number of pupils have been absent due to quarantining. At the time of this visit, a 'bubble' of Year 9 pupils had just returned to school from self-isolation, following one confirmed case of COVID-19.
- All pupils in Years 7 to 9 continue to learn the usual range of subjects that the school offers.
- In Years 10 and 11, pupils are studying all their chosen GCSE subjects. Subject leaders are amending curriculum plans to address the changes in exam content.
- In subjects such as music, design and technology, art and computer science, pupils do not have the same opportunities for practical work as they would normally have. Leaders plan to provide these practical opportunities to pupils later in the school year. Physical education lessons this half term have focused on non-contact sports.
- The curriculum offer in the sixth form has not changed. In A-level science, you told us that practical work has been rescheduled for later in the academic year.
- Teachers have checked pupils' new starting points in each subject. As a result of these checks, there has been a focus on developing pupils' literacy skills this term. You said that a large proportion of your pupils who do not speak English at

home have had limited opportunities to practise their spoken and written English before the school fully reopened.

- The school set up systems prior to lockdown for remote education. Staff have ongoing training to improve their skills in delivering online lessons. You told us that the main challenge to remote education is ensuring that all pupils have access to the digital platforms 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 board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the Dormer Wells Learning Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Ealing. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jude Wilson

Her Majesty's Inspector