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Miss Lyndsey Proctor
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Proctor

Ofsted visit to Airedale Academy

Following my visit with Patricia Head, 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 you, and other senior leaders, including the senior leader responsible for safeguarding. 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 14 September 2020, and all pupils are expected to attend full time. This followed a four-day period of part-time timetables to gradually introduce pupils back to school.
- Attendance is in line with the same time last year.
- The school is teaching the full range of curriculum subjects. However, the content has been adapted and is focused mainly on the theoretical parts of each subject as pupils do not have full access to specialist classrooms and facilities.
- You are making plans for how pupils can share specialist facilities on the school site. You are planning for all pupils to return to the school's full curriculum before the end of this academic year.
- Teachers carried out assessments in each subject during the first two weeks of term to check pupils' starting points and identify any gaps in their learning. Staff have planned regular recap sessions to help pupils remember what they have forgotten and have put extra support in place for some individuals. Leaders intend for pupils to be ready to access the expected curriculum by October half-term at the latest.
- Leaders have introduced a transition session each week for Year 7 pupils to aid their integration into the school, following their extended break from schooling

during the spring and summer terms 2020 when their schools were not open to all pupils.

- Staff have produced new curriculum plans for Year 11 pupils. They have prioritised the essential knowledge that pupils need to acquire. This draws on assessment information that has identified the most important gaps in pupils' learning.
- Leaders are awaiting guidance from examination boards on the content of some vocational courses.
- You have been developing online learning for pupils to use remotely. Pupils can access a virtual classroom if they are unable to attend school. This virtual classroom includes opportunities for direct teaching, recorded lessons and individual study.

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 Wakefield. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kirsty Godfrey
Her Majesty's Inspector