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Rachael Sandham
Principal
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Dear Miss Sandham

Ofsted visit to The Hart School

Following my visit with Jane Spilsbury, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 1 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 members of the senior leadership team, 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 fully to all pupils on 7 September 2020. Pupils are attending full time.
- Attendance is currently just a little below your normal attendance for this time of year. There is a small number of pupils who are not attending as regularly as you would like. You are working with these pupils and their families to encourage regular attendance.
- Pupils in all years are studying all their usual subjects. However, you have had to make changes to what is taught in some subjects because of the protective measures you have put in place. For example, pupils do not share practical equipment in science or design technology. Pupils have low-intensity activities in physical education (PE) because they do not change into PE kit. You regularly review these arrangements in the light of government advice.
- You are currently assessing what pupils know in all subjects. In Year 7, you have done this through externally marked tests. In all other year groups, teachers are checking what pupils have learned through their usual lessons. They are identifying gaps in pupils' learning. You expect this process to be complete soon and then you will use this information to plan pupils' learning in all subjects for the rest of the year.
- At the time of our visit, a small number of pupils were studying at home. Through the school website, they access a week's timetable of lessons, planned by their teachers. You intend to use this system if more pupils need to work from home. If large groups of pupils have to study remotely, teachers will also teach some online live lessons.

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 academy council, the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the Creative Education Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Staffordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Alun Williams
Her Majesty's Inspector