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4 November 2020

Sarah Bishop
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Bishop

Ofsted visit Great Bowden Academy, A Church of England Primary School

Following my visit with Damien Turrell, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 8 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, the head of school and senior leader responsible for the curriculum. 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 27 August 2020. Pupils are attending full time.
- Attendance is broadly similar to what it would typically be at this time in the school year.
- Pupils are learning most subjects of the school's usual curriculum. Due to limits on resources and staffing, not all pupils are being taught design and technology or modern foreign languages, such as Spanish.
- Teachers have checked what gaps in knowledge pupils have in English and mathematics. In other subjects, teachers are reviewing what pupils have remembered from previous units of learning before teaching new content.
- Some pupils have not remembered some of the phonics sounds. Pupils have not read as wide a range of books as they would normally do. Staff are teaching extra phonics lessons and are encouraging pupils to read more widely.
- In mathematics, pupils are not as fluent in using their knowledge as they might have been. Teachers are giving pupils more opportunities to practise this and help them to develop their skills in calculating.

- Leaders have a plan in place in case pupils need to work from home. They have not had to implement this yet. This plan includes support for families who do not have access to technology.

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 Learn Academies multi-academy trust, the director of education for the diocese of Leicester, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Leicestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Helen Williams
Her Majesty's Inspector