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Sofia Darr
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Dear Ms Darr

Ofsted visit to Rockwood Academy

Following my visit with Bianka Zemke, 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 and members of the leadership team. 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 3 September 2020. All pupils are expected to attend full time.
- Pupils' attendance is in line with the normal attendance for this time of year. During the period when schools were only open to some children due to COVID-19 restrictions, staff contacted all pupils and parents daily. You believe that this reassured parents who were worried about sending their children back to school. Staff continue to contact parents when pupils are absent to offer advice and support, and to encourage pupils to attend.
- Pupils across all year groups are studying the full range of subjects that are usually taught. You explained that in each subject, leaders have adjusted curriculum plans to cover any missed content. Your intention is that pupils will return to their usual curriculum by summer 2021.
- You have changed the timings of the school day so there is additional time for activities that promote pupils' mental health, physical health and well-being. For example, at 10am each day, pupils are reminded of the key messages relating to COVID-19.
- You told us that teachers check what pupils know and remember in each lesson. You explained how this has helped teachers to identify areas in which pupils' learning is less secure. For example, some pupils have not remembered key vocabulary in science. Pupils in all year groups are completing formal tests, and you described how teachers will analyse these to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- You explained that leaders have developed online platforms to deliver remote learning and have plans to deliver the curriculum remotely to a larger number

of pupils if needed. Pupils use these platforms to participate in lessons from home, and they are also provided with practical resources. For example, in modern foreign languages, Year 10 and Year 11 pupils have been given revision guides.

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 governing body, 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 Birmingham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Ian Tustian
Her Majesty's Inspector