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5 November 2020

Neil Houchen  
Principal and Chief Executive Officer of Eastwood Park Academy Trust  
The Eastwood Academy  
Rayleigh Road  
Leigh-on-Sea  
Essex  
SS9 5UU

Dear Mr Houchen

### **Ofsted visit to The Eastwood Academy**

Following my visit with Maureen Su, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 22 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 a vice-principal. 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:**

- Pupils in Year 7 returned to school on 2 September 2020. The school reopened to all year groups on 3 September.
- Current levels of attendance are broadly in line with normal attendance at the school.
- Pupils are studying their usual range of subjects. You have employed additional teachers of English, mathematics, science and French to reduce class sizes in all year groups. Some pupils in each year group are given targeted help in these subjects for work they have missed or not fully understood.
- Leaders and teachers reviewed which aspects of the curriculum had not been covered fully between March and July 2020. Teachers assess pupils' understanding on a regular basis. Teachers and leaders use this information to adjust the curriculum in line with pupils' needs.
- You have found more gaps in pupils' understanding in Year 7 than you normally do. You use additional staffing in English and mathematics to help these pupils to catch up.
- You normally provide additional teaching to Year 11 pupils from the second half of this term. This year, you have brought this forward. Year 11 pupils now attend optional additional lessons before school, and compulsory additional lessons after school.

- You have created a separate timetable which would be used if you needed to send a 'bubble' home or if the school was required to close as a result of COVID-19. Teachers plan to use videoconferencing to teach lessons while pupils complete a workbook. The curriculum would mirror that taught in school.

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 of Eastwood Park Academy Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Southend-on-Sea. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Hemmings  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**