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5 November 2020

Anthony Fitzpatrick  
Executive Headteacher  
Barnwell School  
Barnwell  
Stevenage  
Hertfordshire  
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Dear Mr Fitzpatrick

### **Ofsted visit to Barnwell School**

Following my visit with Stefanie Lipinski-Barltrop, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 22 October, 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 members of the senior leadership team, including the senior leader responsible for safeguarding pupils. 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 full time to Year 7 and Year 12 pupils on 3 September 2020. All other year groups returned on 4 September 2020.
- Attendance is currently below what you expect for this time of the year. Leaders are communicating regularly with parents to share expectations that pupils must attend school full time, and to explain the COVID-19 safety procedures in place.
- All pupils are studying the full range of curriculum subjects. In physical education, dance, drama and music, there have been some changes in how different aspects are taught. You are currently not offering pupils the range of extra-curricular activities and off-site visits that you would like.
- Teachers have checked Year 7 pupils' starting points in English, mathematics and science. They checked pupils' reading skills in Years 7, 8 and 9. Teachers have adapted teaching plans to fill any gaps and have put extra support in place for those pupils who need it. Teachers have used a range of assessments to identify what pupils remember in other subjects. The curriculum has been adapted to include aspects of pupils' learning which need revisiting.
- In Years 10 and 11, pupils are studying their chosen examination subjects. Leaders have set up extra teaching sessions at the end of the school day for Year 11 pupils to catch up with lost learning.
- Students in Years 12 and 13 are being taught their chosen subjects. Any students self-isolating at home have access to live lessons online.

- Leaders have developed the online learning system to support remote learning. These are the same lessons that pupils receive in school. Leaders have trained staff, pupils and parents to access the different types of activities.

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 regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hertfordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Fiona Webb  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**