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Jamie Benson
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Dear Mr Benson

Ofsted visit to Alderwood Academy

Following my visit with Marc White, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 6 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 the senior leadership. 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:

- This alternative provision opened fully to pupils again on 3 September 2020. This start date was staggered for some pupils, which is usual practice for this academy.
- Attendance is slightly better than is typical for this time of year. The expectation for full attendance was communicated to parents at the start of the autumn term. Staff also worked with pupils to reduce anxiety and stress about returning to school after such a long break.
- The school offers three curriculum pathways, depending on the type of provision needed by each pupil. Following an initial piece of work entitled 'All about me', all pupils are returning to their specific curriculum pathways in the autumn term.
- On the 'Next Steps Pathway', many subjects from the national curriculum are covered. On the much shorter 'Springboard Pathway', the focus is on developing mathematics and English skills.
- Staff have assessed where pupils have gaps in learning that developed over the spring and summer terms. Staff are concentrating on improving individual pupils' phonics knowledge. Staff are ensuring that reading books are suitable for each pupil's reading ability and interests.
- If remote learning is needed, leaders will provide the same support that was given during the spring and summer terms. This included staff meeting pupils in outdoor areas or 'on the doorstep', packs of work sent home and digital learning. Leaders are exploring their options for live online teaching, should it be needed.

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

Yours sincerely

Fyfe Johnston
Her Majesty's Inspector