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Jemima Reilly
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Dear Ms Reilly

Ofsted visit to Morpeth School

Following my visit with Daniel-John Constable, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 13 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 senior leadership team, the senior leader responsible for safeguarding and some curriculum leaders. 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 10 September 2020. Prior to this date, there had been a staggered start for different year groups. All pupils are expected to attend full time.
- Attendance is slightly below normal for this time of year. Leaders have created additional capacity in the school's attendance management team to work with pupils and their families who are not attending regularly.
- All pupils study the usual range of subjects. Some subject content has been reorganised so that pupils can build on their remote learning effectively.
- You have chosen to assess pupils regularly in class to identify what they have learned and remembered. Overall, you are pleased with the knowledge that pupils have retained. Teachers are using a three-week curriculum cycle so that the sequence of what pupils learn can be quickly changed in response to the outcome of pupil assessments.
- In Years 7 to 9, pupils are studying the usual curriculum. Teachers have chosen what to teach based on the assessment of what pupils learned while education was delivered remotely. For example, in mathematics in Year 7 teachers are focusing on number and numeracy, whereas in English the focus is on short stories.
- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have continued to study the usual curriculum of core and option subjects. You arranged for them to begin learning new topic areas in each subject when they returned in September, to help pupils make a

positive start to their learning. Leaders have also focused resources on improving pupils' academic writing skills.

- In the sixth form, students continue to follow the same curriculum as before. Students study three or four A levels or BTEC subjects, and the offer to Year 12 is as broad as in previous years. Pupils who started Year 12 in September 2020 were given learning resources to prepare them for their new courses. Pupils in Year 13 received lessons during the summer term.
- Leaders have put in place a remote learning curriculum for all subjects. This is aligned to the school's existing curriculum and therefore allows pupils to access their usual range of subjects if they are required to self-isolate at any point. There are plans in place to extend this to year-group 'bubbles' or a wider lockdown if required.

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 and the director of children's services for Tower Hamlets. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mark Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector