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Brendan Plunkett
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Plunkett

Ofsted visit to Lime Academy Larkwood

Following my visit with Andrea Bedeau, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 20 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 staff responsible for attendance and behaviour. 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 pupils on 2 September 2020.
- Attendance is a little lower than at the same time last year. A small number of pupils have had to self-isolate. Leaders track pupils' attendance and follow up all absences. Home visits and phone calls encourage pupils to attend school regularly.
- Pupils continue to study the full range of subjects on offer at the school. More time than usual is given to certain aspects of phonics, English and mathematics. Some pupils get extra help to catch up. Leaders aim for pupils to return to a normal curriculum by the spring term 2021.
- Teachers are checking pupils' learning during lessons. This allows them to understand the gaps in pupils' learning. This information is used to give pupils extra help where needed.
- Teachers have assessed pupils' new starting points. They have found gaps in pupils' mathematical knowledge, particularly in place value, formal methods of calculation and remembering facts. Teachers give extra emphasis to these topics in lessons.
- In reading, leaders identify that pupils in Year 2 have come back to school with gaps in their phonics knowledge. Pupils get extra help to catch up, including working in small groups. Fluency checks in Year 3 identify pupils who need further support. Leaders have bought new reading books to capture pupils' imagination.

- The wider curriculum is covered in the weekly timetable. For example, Year 4 pupils have learned how to bake. After-school activities are curtailed so that COVID-19 precautions can be observed.
- Staff set most homework online so that pupils can get used to working remotely. Leaders and staff have plans to expand remote learning if necessary.

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 chief executive officer of the Lime multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for the London Borough of Waltham Forest. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Brian Oppenheim
Her Majesty's Inspector