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Max Vlahakis
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Dear Mr Vlahakis

Ofsted visit to Leighswood School

Following my visit with Bianka Zemke, 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 members of the senior leadership team. 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 pupils in Years 1 to 6 on 2 September 2020. Pupils in these year groups were expected to attend full time from this date. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes were invited into school as part of a transition programme. School opened to these children on 14 September 2020.
- Pupils' attendance is a little higher than it normally is at this time of year. You explained that attendance has risen steadily, after a slight dip at the start of term.
- Pupils in all years are studying the full range of subjects they usually would. You told us that leaders have looked at the curriculum plans and made adaptations considering any missed learning. Teachers have made changes to support pupils' social and emotional health through planned, daily well-being activities. You anticipate that all pupils will return to the usual curriculum by summer 2021.
- You explained that teachers are assessing pupils in lessons to check what they know and remember. This has helped teachers to identify gaps in pupils' learning. Staff are beginning to formally assess pupils, as they are confident that pupils are settled and happy at school. Teachers will use this information to refine their plans.
- You said that reading is a priority for every year group. You explained that teachers' assessments have shown that some pupils have gaps in their phonic

knowledge, and that other pupils need to improve how they read a text accurately, and with expression. You described how staff are working to rekindle pupils' love of reading and develop their comprehension skills. You are providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their reading.

- In mathematics, leaders have identified the need to strengthen pupils' understanding of place value, written calculation methods and mental mathematics. You told us teachers are focusing on these areas by, for example, introducing additional daily arithmetic sessions.
- All subjects within the wider curriculum continue to be taught. You told us that the use of the school's outdoor space is an important part of this, for example when teaching forest school.
- You explained that there is a plan in place should you need to educate pupils remotely. Teachers will set work that is aligned with the usual curriculum, and then provide support to pupils and parents as and when 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 governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Walsall. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Ian Tustian
Her Majesty's Inspector