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Penny Johnson
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Dear Mrs Johnson,

Ofsted visit to Grays Convent High School

Following my visit with Charlie Fordham, 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 the senior leadership team and the senior leader responsible for safeguarding. 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 on 4 September 2020 to Year 7 and to all pupils on 7 September 2020, at the start of the autumn term.
- Pupils' current attendance is broadly in line with the attendance recorded at the same time in the previous academic year.
- Pupils in all year groups are studying the same subjects taught prior to the partial closure in March 2020. Subject teams are reviewing strategies to overcome the initial limitations in offering some practical work, for example in science for Year 7 and Year 8. Extra-curricular activities, such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award, are gradually being restored.
- Teachers are checking what pupils know and remember across subjects and year groups. This is so that they can identify and plan to fill any gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. Pupils are supported to catch up routinely in lessons and through the additional sessions created in the extended school day.
- In Years 7 and 8, teachers have prioritised revisiting pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling in English. They know that these are aspects to revisit because of the informal checks they have made to see how much pupils know and remember from previous learning.
- In Years 10 and 11, your leadership team's priority is to ensure that pupils, especially those in Year 11, are supported to catch up quickly in their examination courses.

- Working together with leaders, your staff have introduced a programme of remote learning. The content is matched to the lessons that pupils experience in school. This programme is part of your strategy to allow pupils' learning to continue from home as required in the future.

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 chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the director of education for the diocese of Brentwood, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Thurrock. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Christine Dick
Her Majesty's Inspector