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Mr Gary Nelson
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Nelson

Ofsted visit to Wapping High School

Following my visit with Sophie Welch, 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 and members of the extended 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 all pupils on 3 September. They are expected to attend full time.
- Attendance is lower than normal for this time of year. Some pupils did not return in September and remain absent. Leaders are in contact with these families and holding meetings where needed. No year-group 'bubbles' were isolating at the time of the visit.
- Pupils are studying the full curriculum, although changes have been made to the order in which subject content is taught. Leaders emphasise the importance of re-igniting pupils' love of learning. Teachers are using interactive online resources in geography and science to help them identify gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- Teachers are checking prior learning by setting recall tasks at the start of every lesson. Leaders are planning formal assessments after half term. Pupils will be tested on the previous year's curriculum.
- In Years 7 to 9, arrangements for practical subjects such as design technology, performing arts and science have altered. Pupils are unable to access specialist facilities because each class remains in its allocated room. Off-site physical education provision has been moved further afield after the closure of the local facility.
- The number of examination subjects taken by pupils in Years 10 and 11 has not changed. Teachers are harnessing pupils' experience of working remotely by encouraging them to preview each lesson at home. Formal mock examinations for Year 11 will take place earlier than usual.

- Leaders are prepared to move the full curriculum online if necessary. This would replicate the content normally taught in class. Currently, teachers upload resources from each lesson, which can be accessed by absent pupils or those wanting to consolidate their learning at home.

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 Tower Hamlets. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lisa Strong
Her Majesty's Inspector