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Will Morgan
Principal
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Dear Mr Morgan

Ofsted remote visit to The Cotswold Academy

Following my remote visit with Paul Williams, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 5 November 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. Following changes to government guidance and the imposition of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, we made this visit remotely to reduce pressure on the school.

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 the senior leadership team. We did not speak to pupils.

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:

- Year 7 pupils started the new school year on 2 September 2020. All other year groups returned on 3 September 2020.
- Attendance is broadly in line with this time last year.
- Pupils are studying the school's full curriculum. Leaders have changed the order of learning content. For example, geography field trips and whole-class instrumental music lessons will take place later than originally planned.
- Leaders have identified pupils who need extra support with their learning. Teachers check and help pupils to fill gaps in their knowledge. For example, some pupils attend study time after school, where subject leaders teach small groups in English, mathematics and science.
- In some subjects, teachers are focusing on practical elements as pupils missed these during the summer term. For example, in Years 7, 8 and 9 teachers use visualisers to show close-up demonstrations in design and technology lessons.
- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 borrow textbooks from the school library to help them prepare for their GCSEs. They are also encouraged to attend after-school study time and catch-up sessions, including in drama and religious education.
- Sixth-form students continue to study all their A-level subjects. Teachers' assessments are shared with students and parents. Some students need additional support with their learning as a result of interruptions caused by COVID-19, including one-to-one tuition sessions.

- Leaders have plans in place for remote learning should pupils need to study at home. Their plans use a range of resources, including streaming live lessons and using textbooks.

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 Gloucestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Marie Thomas
Her Majesty's Inspector