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16 November 2020

David Lancaster
Principal
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Dear Mr Lancaster,

Ofsted visit to Fulwood Academy

Following my visit with Alyson Middlemass, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 15 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 with responsibility for safeguarding, the subject leader for mathematics and the chair of the trust board. 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:

- You opened the school to all pupils from 3 September 2020. Each year group returned to school one at a time. All pupils were expected to be in school full time from 9 September 2020. A very small number of pupils are currently on part-time timetables. The expectation is that they will attend full time soon.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly in line with their usual attendance for this time of the year.
- All pupils in the school are studying their usual range of subjects. You have adapted the personal development curriculum to prioritise support for pupils' mental health and well-being. You explained to us that you believe this is helping pupils to re-engage with school life.
- You asked all teachers to focus on building pupils' confidence in their learning. You and your leaders have changed the order in which topics are delivered in some practical subjects, such as science and food technology. You expect that pupils will learn the normal content in these subjects by the start of the 2021 summer term.
- You have adapted the Year 7 curriculum to support pupils with the transition from their primary schools. Your staff have increased the focus on developing reading skills in Years 7 to 9. You informed us that this is because you have

identified that some pupils are not as far on with their reading as they might usually be.

- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are continuing with all of the GCSE and vocational subjects that they chose for their options.
- You plan to ask teachers to assess pupils' knowledge later this term. You intend to use the resulting information to identify what pupils have missed or forgotten during the period of local restrictions. Schemes of work across all subjects will be adjusted to take account of what teachers' assessments tell you.
- You have developed your provision to deliver remote education. This closely matches the work taught in subject curriculums. You explained how your online systems are helping pupils to keep up with their work when they are absent.

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 regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Lancashire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Ahmed Marikar
Her Majesty's Inspector