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13 November 2020

Mary Bickmore
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Bickmore

Ofsted visit to Lime Academy Forest Approach

Following my visit with Gary Rawlings, 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 you, the deputy headteacher, the school business manager and one of your assistant headteachers. 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 2020. All but a few pupils are on full-time timetables.
- Attendance since reopening has been below the school's normal rate for this time of year. In the senior part of the school, 88 pupils are currently self-isolating.
- Every pupil is following an adapted version of their normal curriculum, personalised to reflect their special educational needs and/or disabilities. You expect it will be very difficult to return to normal by summer 2021 if social distancing measures continue. This is because pupils' education, health and care plans include contact activities which you say are currently not possible, such as trampoline rebound therapy.
- Sixth-form students are not as well prepared for leaving school as you would usually expect, because of the disruption caused by COVID-19. Using additional funding, you are employing coaches and mentors to help these pupils catch up.
- Teachers have identified gaps in the development of pupils' communication skills. They found out that the biggest impact of the period when schools were only open to some children due to COVID-19 restrictions has been on pupils who need to use symbols instead of words. A wider range of augmented alternative communication strategies are being used to help these non-verbal pupils catch up.
- Teachers are finding out which pupils are no longer on track to be successful in their functional skills examination, and are providing these pupils with work

aimed at closing any gaps. Teachers are trying to sustain this even though these pupils are currently working from home again.

- Laptops or tablet computers have been issued to all pupils who need them to learn remotely. Some non-teaching staff have been designated to support teachers with uploading resources for remote learning.

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 and the chief executive officer of the Lime Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Havering. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Wright
Her Majesty's Inspector