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Austin Sheppard
Principal
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Dear Mr Sheppard

Ofsted remote visit to South Bank Engineering UTC

Following my remote visit with Sophie Welch, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 11 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 (coronavirus) 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, your vice-principal, deputy vice-principal and the executive principal. We also spoke to the member of staff who oversees safer recruitment. 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 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:

- Approximately one fifth of pupils and students have had to work from home at some point this term due to self-isolation or awaiting COVID-19 test results.
- All pupils and students are studying their usual range of subjects.
- Leaders have reordered the curriculum content in some subjects. Pupils and students do less practical work in science and engineering than usual. Leaders aim to give more opportunities for practical work by the summer term 2021.
- Teachers have checked all pupils' and students' starting points in each subject this term. This has helped them to prioritise key skills and knowledge. For example, there is a focus on reading skills in Years 10 and 11.
- Pupils in Year 10 spent the first three weeks of this term learning a 'recovery' curriculum in English, mathematics and science. This was to cover work that pupils may have missed in Years 7 to 9 at their previous schools. Year 11 pupils also spent time at the start of term catching up on work in these subjects.
- Students in Years 12 and Year 13 continue to study their chosen subjects. In both year groups, teachers of A-level courses have adapted the curriculum this term to cover work that students may have missed. In September, a higher number of students than usual joined Year 12.
- Leaders set up a Year 14 this year. This caters specifically for a group of learners whose apprenticeships fell through in summer 2020 as a result of

COVID-19. They are now working towards a Higher National Certificate in engineering.

- Remote education is an established part of the curriculum, particularly for students in Years 12 to 14. Students regularly complete and upload assignments online as part of their courses. Pupils and students isolating at home have access to work from their timetabled lessons each day. For example, teachers record voiceovers to their PowerPoint lessons. Staff are familiar with online learning and leaders plan to deliver additional training as the year progresses.

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 chief executive officer of the South Bank Academies multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Lambeth. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jude Wilson
Her Majesty's Inspector