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Catherine Gadd
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Gadd

Ofsted visit to Beacon Academy

Following my visit with Rachel Tordoff, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 3 November, 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 with you, members of the senior leadership team, the associate headteacher and the chair of the governing body. 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 26 August 2020. The vast majority of pupils are attending full time.
- Current attendance is higher than that seen at the same time last year. A small minority of pupils were isolating at the time of the visit.
- Pupils are studying the full range of subjects. Leaders plan that pupils will study fully the usual curriculum, introduced last year, by summer term 2021.
- Teachers have identified pupils' new starting points in reading. They are providing extra phonics and reading support for pupils in Years 1 to 5. In all year groups, staff are supporting pupils to catch up in writing.
- Teachers are revisiting forgotten content in mathematics. They are focusing on helping pupils to catch up on their knowledge of number. Some pupils are also receiving extra support.
- Staff are focusing on improving children's communication and language knowledge and skills in the Nursery and Reception Years.
- In the wider curriculum, staff are adapting their planning so that pupils can learn knowledge they have missed or forgotten during the period of time when the school was not fully open.
- For a very small minority of pupils, the curriculum is being delivered remotely. Leaders have plans in place to provide all pupils with remote education, including online learning, should this be needed.

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

Yours sincerely

John Lawson
Her Majesty's Inspector