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Sunil Chotai
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Dear Mr Chotai

Ofsted remote visit to Charles Darwin School

Following my remote visit with Lucy Bruce, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 10 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, members of the senior leadership team, some heads of department and the student services manager. 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:

- At the time of the visit, 46 pupils from Year 13 were isolating. Very few pupils have had to work from home since September 2020.
- All year groups are studying the full range of subjects. The school has been zoned to minimise movement and, as a result, some pupils cannot access specialist facilities for practical subjects. In science, time normally used for practical work is being used to teach theoretical knowledge.
- Teachers are still identifying the gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. In mathematics, pupils complete assessments every fortnight. In English, teachers set tasks to test pupils' writing and offer feedback to help rebuild confidence.
- Year 7 pupils are being taught in mixed ability English groups and have been set in mathematics since half term. Normally, they are set in both subjects from the start of Year 7, based on Year 6 test results. In Year 8, English teachers are prioritising pupils' vocabulary and reading skills as these have regressed.
- In Year 11, several changes have been made to curriculum sequencing within subjects. Under normal circumstances, pupils would be completing their music

coursework, but instead they are preparing for the listening paper. In mathematics, teachers have prioritised challenging topics such as ratio, proportion and quadratic equations. Ordinarily, these would have been taught in Year 10.

- Sixth-form students have full access to the science laboratories. Students in Year 13 have retained prior knowledge but are weaker in applying this in examination questions. This is due to the time lost last year.
- If pupils are isolating at home, they follow their normal timetable. They can access lessons 'live' or watch recordings. Their attendance is monitored, and they are expected to submit work for feedback. The remote education offer is more precisely aligned to the taught curriculum in Years 11 and 13.

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

Yours sincerely

Lisa Strong
Her Majesty's Inspector