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James Harris
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Harris

Ofsted remote visit to Walton Le Dale High School

Following my remote visit with Will Smith, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 5 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 and members of the senior leadership team, including the senior leader responsible for safeguarding. 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:

- You opened the school to pupils in Years 7 and 11 on 2 September 2020. Pupils in Years 8, 9 and 10 returned to school on 3 September 2020. All pupils are expected to attend full time.
- You told us that pupils' attendance has been lower than usual for this time of year. You are working with families to promote pupils' regular attendance.
- Pupils in Years 7 to 11 are studying all of the subjects that make up the school's usual curriculum. These include the subjects that pupils in Years 10 and 11 will be examined in. You told us that teachers are adapting the activities in subjects such as science and design and technology to help pupils keep their distance from each other.
- You have asked teachers to find out what pupils remember about the subject content that they learned in the spring and summer terms. This is so that teachers can alter what pupils are learning in lessons. You have begun to gather information about pupils' new starting points across all subjects so that you can decide where they need extra support.
- You told us that pupils have online access to the resources that are being used in lessons. This means that pupils who cannot be in school are mostly covering the same learning as others. You explained that teachers sometimes provide alternative activities to support remote learning in practical subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Michael Pennington
Her Majesty's Inspector