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25 November 2020

Helen Cullen  
Headteacher  
Sexey's School  
Cole Road  
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Somerset  
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Dear Mrs Cullen

### **Ofsted remote visit to Sexey's School**

Following my remote visit with Simon Rowe, 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, two of the assistant headteachers, the director of sixth form and the pastoral support 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:**

- This term, a small number of pupils, approximately one in 20, have had to work either at home or in one of the boarding houses while they awaited the results of a test for COVID-19.
- Pupils, including students in the sixth form, are studying the full range of subjects that they were studying before the COVID-19 period. Pre-existing plans to expand the number of subjects offered in the sixth form have not been affected by the impact of COVID-19. Geology, for example, has been added as a new A level.
- Teachers have used a range of assessments to check on pupils' knowledge now that they are back at school. This includes the 'low stakes quizzes' that are a standard part of the lesson structure at Sexey's School. All Year 7 pupils took baseline tests at the start of the autumn term.
- In Years 7 to 9, there have been some changes to the timing and sequencing of the curriculum to take account of the disruption caused by COVID-19. In French, for example, one module has been moved from Year 8 into Year 9. In physical education the focus is currently on individual sports, such as athletics, rather than team sports.
- In Years 10 and 11, leaders and teachers have adapted the curriculum to deal with the impact of the pandemic. For example, the order of units in English was switched so that some literature topics that teachers felt were more suited

to remote education were covered in spring and summer. The English language topics they replaced were studied this term.

- You provide remote education in the form of 'live' online lessons for individual pupils who are required to work from home. As far as possible, a pupil's typical day of remote education follows the timetable that they would be following if they were physically in school. You intend to use the same model of providing 'live' online lessons, should a whole 'bubble' of pupils need to work from home.

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 director of education for the Diocese of Bath and Wells, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Somerset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Lee  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**