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25 November 2020

Kerry Nelson  
Head of School  
Whitfield Valley Primary Academy  
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Stoke-on-Trent  
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Dear Mrs Nelson

### **Ofsted remote visit to Whitfield Valley Primary Academy**

Following my remote visit with Heather Phillips, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 17 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, the executive headteacher, members of the senior leadership team and leaders 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:**

- At the time of the visit, no 'bubbles' were self-isolating. Since September, approximately a fifth of the pupils have had to work from home.
- Pupils are studying the usual range of subjects. You have made changes to the way some curriculum content is taught. For example, pupils are not going on educational visits this term, but you have thought about alternative ways to bring learning to life. You expect pupils to return to their usual curriculum before the summer term 2021.
- You told us that staff regularly check pupils' learning and how much they know and remember. They have identified that pupils' spelling requires extra attention.
- You said that reading continues to be a whole-school priority. Additional opportunities to read have been implemented across the curriculum.
- In mathematics, leaders use regular assessments to identify gaps in learning. Staff are using information from the results to plan what they are going to teach pupils next.

- In other subjects, teachers revisit missed learning. For example, in geography, teachers are focusing on vocabulary that has been missed or misunderstood and linking this terminology with current learning.
- Leaders explained that digital learning is available for pupils to access when they are not in school. Teachers upload work daily for those pupils who are isolating. This system will continue if there is a need to deliver the curriculum remotely in the future.

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 and the chief executive officer of the Inspirational Learning Academy Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Stoke-on-Trent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Eve Morris  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**