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Jill Alexander-Steele
Headteacher
The Roebuck School
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Dear Mrs Alexander-Steele

Ofsted remote visit to The Roebuck School

Following my remote visit with Naomi Taylor, 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, the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders. 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:

- Since the start of term, approximately two thirds of pupils have spent some time working from home.
- You explained that pupils are studying all national curriculum subjects apart from music and a modern foreign language. You have made this decision to allow more time for the teaching of English and mathematics. You intend to return to the school's normal curriculum by summer term 2021.
- You have carried out checks to establish pupils' new starting points in reading. Teachers are providing more time for the teaching of phonics to help pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 get back on track with their reading. You have also increased the number of opportunities for older pupils to read for sustained periods of time.
- Checks on pupils' learning in mathematics have informed teachers that, since March 2020, pupils have forgotten some mathematical vocabulary and important number facts that they have learned previously. Teachers are providing additional time to help pupils to practise calculating number and revisit methods for multiplication and division.

- In subjects such as science and geography, you informed us that leaders have identified the learning that pupils missed in the spring and summer terms. Subject leaders are adapting their curriculum plans to make sure that pupils catch up on any lost learning.
- You described how teachers are delivering remote education through a combination of paper-based and digital resources. Teachers provide those pupils working at home with a timetable of activities to follow. Where possible, these activities mirror the work being completed in school by the rest of the class.

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

Garry White
Her Majesty's Inspector