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Anna Leng
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Dear Mrs Leng

Ofsted remote visit to Gainsborough Academy

Following my remote visit with Chris Stevens, 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 chief executive officer of the Wickersley Partnership Trust and members of the leadership team. 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, a few pupils have self-isolated and completed their schoolwork at home.
- All pupils in Years 7 to 9 are studying their usual range of subjects.
- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are studying all of the GCSE and vocational subjects that they chose.
- Teachers have adapted some practical aspects of science, geography, music and physical education. The personal, social, health and economic education curriculum has been reordered to meet pupils' current needs. Leaders plan for all pupils to return to the normal curriculum before the summer term 2021.
- Teachers have checked pupils' new starting points in all subjects. They have used this information to adjust curriculum plans and to focus on the important knowledge that pupils need. Leaders are helping pupils to catch up, including by extending the school day for some older pupils.
- Pupils in Years 7 and 8 have completed reading tests. Some of these pupils have a lower reading age than would be expected. A programme of support is in place for them.
- Pupils can access their learning online if they are absent from school. The online learning is similar to what pupils would learn if they were in school.

- Teachers provide paper-based resources to pupils who require them. Leaders are helping any pupils who cannot access online learning. For example, they have provided some pupils with laptops.

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 Wickersley Partnership Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Lincolnshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jayne Ashman
Her Majesty's Inspector