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25 November 2020

Paul Yeomans  
Acting Headteacher  
Springfield House Community Special School  
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Dear Mr Yeomans

### **Ofsted remote visit to Springfield House Community Special School**

Following my remote visit with Tim Hill, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 12 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 senior leadership team, the member of staff responsible for safeguarding and the lead practitioner for behaviour and safety. 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, there were no 'bubbles' isolating away from school due to COVID-19. A small number of children are currently self-isolating because of positive cases at home. Since the start of the autumn term 2020, there has been one case where two groups of pupils and linked staff have had to be sent home due to a positive case of COVID-19.
- Except for a modern foreign language subject, pupils are studying all national curriculum subjects. While you would like to return to your full curriculum by spring 2021, you feel it will not be fully in place until September 2021.
- You told us that teachers have recently completed checks on what pupils have remembered in English and mathematics. You told us that these checks have highlighted the gaps that have appeared in pupils' readiness to learn. Your recovery curriculum is focusing on rebuilding these skills and overcoming the difficult experiences that pupils faced during the lockdown.
- In reading, while pupils seem to have maintained their decoding skills, you think that their ability to understand what they have read has been more of a struggle for them since they have returned.

- In mathematics, you have noticed that pupils' ability to use and apply their knowledge in different mathematical problems is not as strong now as it was.
- In terms of remote learning, you provided online learning packs and, where needed, you provided pupils with paper-based learning packs linked to all areas of the curriculum. You mentioned that these packs are tailored to their ability. You decided to use a paper-based approach because you feel many pupils would have had difficulty accessing online learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Chris Pollitt  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**