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Caroline Waugh
Head of School
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Dear Mrs Waugh

Ofsted remote visit to Rye Hills Academy

Following my remote visit with Chris Pearce, 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 vice principal, two assistant vice principals and the director of teaching and learning. 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:

- You have not closed any whole 'bubbles' because of COVID-19 restrictions. Around half of the pupils in the school, however, have worked remotely for a period of time since the start of term.
- Pupils are studying their usual range of subjects. There have been changes in some practical subjects such as art, design and technology and music, so that pupils do not have to share equipment. You have changed elements of the information technology curriculum so that there is a greater focus for pupils on how to stay safe online while working remotely.
- In all years, leaders are using in-class assessment to check what learning has been lost because of COVID-19 restrictions. In Year 11, there are also formal assessments to check pupils' gaps in knowledge in relation to exam skills.
- In Years 7 to 9, your checks have shown that pupils have gaps in knowledge in English and mathematics. You have put more adult support into these subjects to help pupils. In modern foreign languages, leaders have removed some formal assessments to allow lesson time to be used to teach missed topics to pupils.
- In Year 11, you are using the information gathered from assessments to target support for pupils in a range of subjects. This support is delivered before and after the normal school day, as well as during registration time.
- The remote curriculum is closely aligned with the school's normal curriculum. Leaders are planning to deliver more live lessons when whole classes or

bubbles self-isolate. When small groups and individuals self-isolate, they can access the same work as pupils who remain in normal lessons. Teachers provide work both digitally and in paper form, according to pupils' needs.

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 chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Nunthorpe Multi-Academy Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Redcar and Cleveland. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Vellensworth
Her Majesty's Inspector