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10 December 2020

Jo French  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs French

### **Ofsted remote visit to Tower Road Academy**

Following my remote visit with Simon Hollingsworth, 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, and members of the senior 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:**

- The Reception Year and class-group 'bubbles' were isolating at the time of the visit. A small proportion of pupils have had to work from home since the start of term.
- All pupils are studying the usual range of subjects.
- Teachers have checked pupils' skills in reading. Pupils' understanding of the books they read is not as strong as it was. Teachers are providing pupils with more opportunities to read fiction and non-fiction books during the school day to help them to develop their skills in comprehension.
- Teachers' assessments in mathematics have shown that pupils' ability to calculate is not as secure as it was before the school closed. Teachers have restructured mathematics lessons to make sure that pupils practise arithmetic skills daily. Pupils are also given opportunities to tackle more complex calculations using a written method.
- Pupils are finding it difficult to plan and compose extended pieces of writing across a range of genres since returning to school. Teachers are supporting pupils by providing them with guidance on how they can develop their writing stamina and skills. Pupils are given tasks which require them to write in detail across a range of subjects to help them to improve.
- Staff have delivered remote learning to children in the Reception Year who are isolating at the moment. Children receive 'live' teaching in phonics, mathematics and one other subject each day and they have tasks that they have to complete, following the input from their teachers. Leaders have plans in place to deliver remote education to other year groups, including 'live' teaching, if the need arises.

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 local governing body, the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the Keystone Multi-Academy 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

David Carter  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**