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Sharon Richards
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Richards

Ofsted remote visit to Holley Park Academy

Following my remote visit with Suzanne Dunn, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 19 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 academy ambassador, the early years lead, the mathematics lead, the English lead and the operations manager. 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:

- All pupils returned to school in September 2020. At the time of the visit you had not sent any 'bubbles' home to self-isolate. A small number of pupils have had to study from home since the start of term.
- All pupils are studying the full range of subjects that make up the school's curriculum. You told us that you have made some adaptations to the sequencing of content in some subjects, for example in music and physical education. You explained that you intend to return pupils to the school's usual curriculum by summer 2021.
- Teachers have assessed pupils' new starting points in reading and phonics. You told us that in Years 1 and 2 pupils' decoding skills are not as strong, and you believe this is down to a lack of repetition and practice. Teachers are carrying out additional daily phonics sessions and are providing pupils who have fallen behind with more focused support in lessons.
- Teachers have used assessment in mathematics to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. You explained that you are using a 'recovery curriculum' to teach any learning that was lost during the period of the COVID-

19 restrictions alongside new content. You are also providing additional support and intervention during lessons to enable pupils to catch up.

- In other subjects, you have altered the curriculum to focus more on skills. In subjects such as geography and French, you are revisiting previously taught skills before moving on to teach new content. You also told us that you have a greater focus on pupils' well-being and are dedicating more time to personal, social and health education.
- You explained that you are working on plans to deliver remote education. You intend to offer a blend of online and paper-based resources. You told us that remote learning will be as closely aligned to the school's usual curriculum as possible, with a focus on practical skills.

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, chair of the board of trustees, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Sunderland. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Gill Wild
Her Majesty's Inspector