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4 January 2021

Daniel George  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr George

### **Ofsted remote visit to Tilbury Pioneer Academy**

Following my remote visit with Steve Mellors, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 1 December 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.

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, other school leaders, including leaders responsible for safeguarding arrangements, and leaders of the trust. We did not speak to pupils because of the protective measures in place.

### **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 (coronavirus) 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:**

- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 were self-isolating at the time of the visit. This is the second time that pupils in the Year 6 'bubble' have self-isolated. Approximately two thirds of pupils have had to learn from home at some point since the start of term in September 2020.
- Pupils are studying their usual range of subjects. You continue to use your long-term curriculum plans as the basis for what pupils will learn this academic year. You are adjusting the way in which different subjects are taught so that pupils can catch up on missed work by the end of the academic year.
- In reading, leaders' first priority was to address the regression in some pupils' fluency. Teachers continue to focus on this in lessons and in the work that pupils do at home.
- Leaders and teachers of mathematics initially assessed pupils' understanding of key concepts, such as place value. They used this information to prioritise what was taught during the first half term. They continue to prioritise different aspects of the curriculum based on what new assessments tell them.
- Some pupils have extra lessons in English and mathematics to help them catch up where they have fallen behind.
- In all subjects, teachers check whether pupils understand what they would normally have been taught since March 2020. When teachers identify that

pupils have missed some key content, they incorporate this into what they teach this academic year.

- In Reception, some children had weaker fine motor skills and number skills than is normally the case. Teachers have worked with the children to develop these skills.
- When year-group bubbles are required to study from home, they learn through a combination of paper-based packs of work, online work and 'live' lessons delivered through video conferencing. You provide computers to pupils who need them. The work that pupils complete is similar to that they would have covered in school, but it may be delivered at a slightly different time and in a different way.
- When individual pupils have to learn from home they are provided with paper-based work packs and have access to online materials.

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 Gateway Learning Community multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Thurrock. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Hemmings  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**