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Clive Rosewell
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Rosewell

Ofsted remote visit to Willowfield School

Following my remote visit with Lucy Bruce, 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, members of the senior leadership team, the senior leader responsible for safeguarding, the attendance lead and some heads of department. 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:

- A small number of pupils have had to work from home since September 2020.
- All pupils are studying the full range of subjects. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 have limited access to specialist facilities for some practical subjects. This is because the school has been zoned to reduce movement.
- Three weeks into term, English teachers set an informal writing task for Year 7 pupils, to replace the formal baseline testing that normally takes place. This revealed that pupils are struggling to use clauses and punctuation accurately. Teachers have started to address these gaps.
- In Years 7 to 9, a significant number of pupils have fallen behind with reading. Teachers have adapted the English curriculum so that one lesson per week is dedicated to improving this skill. Pupils in need of more focused support are taught in small groups by a teacher familiar to them. Instead of reading one class novel as usual, all pupils will read four new texts during the year.
- In mathematics, the higher and foundation groups in Year 11 are following the same topics simultaneously. Normally, they would be following different programmes. This is to enable flexibility of movement between groups after pupils' mock examinations. In geography, Year 11 teachers are revisiting work

about coasts from last term, while teaching new material about rivers in parallel.

- Leaders are preparing to move the curriculum online if necessary. When pupils are isolating at home, they follow their normal timetable. They access a set of slides for each lesson which is narrated by their teacher. Leaders are piloting 'live' lessons online, and these will be launched as soon as staff training is complete.

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 Waltham Forest. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lisa Strong
Her Majesty's Inspector