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Jane Galbraith
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Dear Mrs Galbraith

Ofsted remote visit to Lathom High School: A Technology College

Following my remote visit with Emma Gregory, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 26 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 other leaders. 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 recently introduced a rota for pupils' on-site education. This system involves one half of pupils from all year groups being educated for a week on-site while the other half receive remote education.
- Almost all pupils have had to work from home for a short period since the start of term. Approximately one third of pupils had to self-isolate on two or more separate occasions.
- You told us that pupils in all year groups are mainly learning the usual curriculum in different subjects. However, teachers in some subjects, such as physical education, are delivering practical elements of their subjects differently than they have in the past. You plan to resume the usual curriculum by summer 2021.
- Teachers are mostly using informal strategies to assess how well pupils remember important information that was taught before the current school year.
- The subject leaders told us about some of the key information that pupils have forgotten. For example, some younger pupils cannot remember important mathematical facts to do with shape and space. Teachers are addressing this loss of knowledge by spending more time going over previous learning than they would ordinarily.
- Subject leaders also told us about other factors that have impacted negatively on pupils' learning, such as reduced stamina for writing at length. They told us that they are addressing this issue by focusing on developing pupils' extended writing.

- Most of the pupils access remote education online. They use resources uploaded by their teachers to follow their usual curriculum.
- Since the introduction of the rota system, teachers have made further changes to the way that they teach. This is to make sure that pupils cover all intended content whether they are learning in school or at home.

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 Lancashire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Will Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector