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Nick Stanton
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Stanton

Ofsted remote visit to Stroud and Cotswold Alternative Provision School

Following my remote visit with Jen Southall, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 24 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 the deputy headteacher. 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 study from home for short periods since the start of term.
- Pupils are studying all subjects. However, you have had to modify aspects of physical education and personal, social, health and economic education. You expect all pupils to return to their usual curriculum by the summer term 2021.
- Since the school reopened to all pupils, teachers have checked what pupils know and can remember in reading, writing and mathematics. This includes receiving information from pupils' 'partner schools' when they start. This checking helps teachers to learn more about gaps in pupils' knowledge in these subjects.
- Reading and writing are priorities. You are focusing on improving pupils' spelling. Phonics is taught each day to help pupils catch up on the learning they have missed.
- In mathematics, teachers have identified gaps in pupils' knowledge of number and calculation since they returned to school in September 2020. You are targeting these aspects so that pupils can learn to solve a range of mathematical problems with speed and confidence.
- Since all pupils returned in September 2020, your priorities have included supporting their mental health and well-being. As part of this, you have

increased the time given to music in the curriculum so that pupils can enjoy the therapeutic nature and creativity of this subject.

- Currently, most vocational courses and work experience placements for the older pupils have ceased. You expect to reintroduce these as soon as possible.
- You use a combination of paper-based and digital activities for remote education. You expect every pupil to have personalised activities to meet their needs. Leaders are prepared for pupils to learn remotely, should this be needed.

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

Yours sincerely

Stewart Gale
Her Majesty's Inspector