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21 December 2020

Angela Wellman
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Dear Mrs Wellman

Ofsted remote visit to Grove Park School

Following my remote visit with Alice Roberts, 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. 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 senior leadership team. 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:

- Very few pupils have had to study from home for any period of time since the start of the autumn term because of COVID-19.
- Pupils are studying the school's usual range of subjects. However, leaders have made some amendments. For example, some practical aspects of the cookery curriculum will be taught later in the year than normal.
- The school places a strong emphasis on supporting pupils' personal, social, health and emotional development. This is particularly so for the youngest and newest children and for students in the sixth form, as they prepare to leave school. Outdoor activities are taking place as usual and the school continues to use its hydrotherapy pool.
- Secondary-aged pupils are studying courses as planned, including college courses and courses leading to qualifications. However, some aspects of the curriculum, such as work experience, are not taking place.
- Teachers checked pupils' English and mathematics learning at the start of the autumn term, as usual. Teachers are using these assessments, along with a range of information about pupils' additional needs, to plan learning which is personalised to each pupil.
- Most pupils have maintained reading skills from earlier in the year. However, teachers feel that some have made slower progress than they should during

recent months. Teachers are providing individualised support for pupils according to need, including extra phonics learning where appropriate.

- As with reading, pupils have remembered much of their mathematics learning but have made slower progress than teachers would usually expect. Teachers continue to plan work to support each pupil's progress.
- Leaders have taken parental views into account when making plans for remote education in the future. For example, they intend to provide some live online lessons, as well as pre-recorded lessons and paper-based learning packs, so that sixth-form students have opportunities to interact with each other.

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 East Sussex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Julie Sackett
Her Majesty's Inspector