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Toni Holdsworth
Principal
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Dear Mrs Holdsworth

Ofsted remote visit to Irlam and Cadishead Academy

Following my remote visit with Rachel Goodwin, 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, members of the senior leadership team, including the senior leader responsible for safeguarding, and a group of subject 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:

- A group of pupils from the Year 8 'bubble' are currently self-isolating. Since the start of September, about one half of all pupils have learned from home on at least one occasion.
- Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are studying the usual range of curriculum subjects. You told us that in some subjects, teachers are reordering some units of work so that equipment can be shared equally among all pupils. You plan to return to the school's usual curriculum by the summer term 2021.
- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are studying all of the subjects that they will be examined in. You explained that they have full access to the specialist rooms and resources that they need to study each subject.
- You told us that teachers are checking what pupils can remember about the units of work that they covered last year. This is so teachers can adjust what pupils learn next. You explained that teachers also use this information to revisit missed learning when starting new units of work.
- You told us that checks on pupils' learning have identified gaps in their reading, writing and mathematical skills. You explained that you have provided additional time each morning to help pupils to catch up.
- You have an online system to support pupils' learning when they cannot be in school. You told us that you have provided equipment for some pupils so that

they can access this system when they are learning from home.

- You explained that pupils are using the online system to access resources in every subject. When whole classes are learning remotely, pupils can also attend 'live' lessons.

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 chief executive officer of the United Learning multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Salford. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Michael Pennington
Her Majesty's Inspector