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Lynsey Wilkinson
Head of School
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Dear Miss Wilkinson

Ofsted remote visit to Huntcliff School

Following my remote visit with Chris Smith, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 19 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.

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, including the special educational needs coordinator and the designated safeguarding leader. We also spoke to the school's two pastoral leaders. We did not speak to pupils because of the protective measures in place.

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 (coronavirus) 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:

- Approximately 20% of pupils have had to learn from home since the start of the term due to COVID-19. At the time of the visit, 55 pupils in Year 10 were isolating.
- Nearly all pupils are studying their usual range of subjects. You told us that a small number of Year 7 pupils attend lessons in English and mathematics instead of some of their language lessons. In tutorial lessons, some pupils are revisiting curriculum content in English and mathematics that was taught remotely during the period when schools were only open to some pupils due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- You told us that teachers have been assessing how well pupils understand the curriculum content that they learned remotely between March and September 2020. This, and discussions with their primary school counterparts regarding the content pupils may have missed, has highlighted to teachers that Year 7 pupils do not fully understand the mathematical concepts of shape, space and measures. Teachers are focusing additional interventions on these concepts to help support pupils in this regard.
- Teachers of pupils in some Year 10 and Year 11 mathematics classes have identified that pupils' understanding of trigonometry and simultaneous equations requires further reinforcement to reach the levels that pupils were at prior to March 2020. Pupils cover these topics during the daily tutorial sessions, which, for identified pupils, now focus on English and mathematics.

- Leaders described how they have used some of the COVID-19 catch-up premium to supplement and improve on the school's resources and ability to provide remote learning. You have invested in more laptops for pupils and teaching resources for staff.
- The school's digital systems and working procedures allow parents, staff and pupils to communicate remotely about pupils' learning. Additionally, staff have organised and led remote parent consultation events.
- Recent staff training included practical ideas and solutions linked to remote and digital learning. Pupils who are absent from school follow their usual curriculum. You told us that on occasion this term teachers have taught simultaneous 'live' lessons to pupils in attendance at school and those isolating 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 Redcar and Cleveland. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lee Elliott
Her Majesty's Inspector