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James Doherty
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Dear Mr Doherty

Ofsted remote visit to UTC Portsmouth

Following my remote visit with Laurie Anderson, 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 members of your 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:

- At the time of the visit, just under a fifth of pupils had needed to self-isolate and study from home because of COVID-19. The majority have had to do this for only two or three days. Leaders have not been required to send home any 'bubbles' of pupils.
- Pupils are studying their usual range of subjects. While the majority of the curriculum remains the same, COVID-19 restrictions have impacted on some of the college's normal provision. For example, the college's industry partners are currently unable to visit and support the pupils. Leaders are keen to reintroduce these face-to-face events as soon as possible.
- Teachers are using a mixture of formal mock examinations alongside regular quizzes to identify what pupils know and remember. Teachers have used this knowledge to provide support both in lessons and during the timetabled mentoring sessions that all pupils attend weekly.
- Pupils in Year 11 are continuing to study all of their examination subjects. Subject leaders have identified where pupils feel they have gaps in their knowledge, and have adapted the curriculum. For example, in English literature, teachers are reading a shorter set text with pupils to give more time for class discussion and analysis.
- Leaders have reorganised some of the curriculum for Years 10 and 11 to give all students practical experiences in the science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects. Time in the specialist workshops has either been

moved to the spring term or is being completed in very small groups due to the health and safety measures in place.

- Any pupils who are off school self-isolating are expected to attend their timetabled lessons online. From home, pupils can speak to and message their class teachers for support, and can access the same resources as their peers. Staff members have regular online 'check-ins' with pupils and their parents, and provide additional social and emotional support if required.

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 board of trustees, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Portsmouth. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Aimee Floyd
Her Majesty's Inspector