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Dear Mrs Graham

Ofsted remote visit to West Derby School

Following my remote visit with Jonathan Smart, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 26 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; members of your senior leadership team, one of whom is also the designated safeguarding lead; the senior teaching lead; the senior pastoral lead; the two heads of mathematics; the head of history; the special educational needs coordinator; and members of the support staff. We did not speak to pupils and students.

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:

- Almost all pupils and students in Years 7 to 13 have had to study from home for a short period of time since September.
- In Years 7 to 13, you said that pupils and students are studying the full range of subjects in their usual curriculum. Where possible, you have continued with extra-curricular activities, for example virtual visits, computing club and table tennis.
- You described how teachers use everyday lessons to check what pupils and students have remembered of the learning that they have completed since March 2020. Teachers have amended their curriculum plans to match pupils' and students' new starting points. You expect to return to your usual curriculum plans by summer 2021.
- You explained that in Years 7 to 9, teachers have adjusted the order in which they teach some of the curriculum content. For example, in history, teachers have condensed topics. In English, teachers are developing pupils' writing skills. In other subjects, such as physical education and mathematics, teachers set extra homework to reinforce core knowledge.

- All pupils in Years 10 and 11, and students in Years 12 and 13, are following their usual GCSE, A-level and vocational examination courses. You informed us that students in Years 12 and 13 are taking more responsibility for their own learning. This is because they made full use of online learning resources during the summer term.
- You continue to provide remote education for pupils who need to study at home. You said that this involves a combination of online and paper-based resources. You explained that remote education mirrors the usual school timetable.
- You explained that students in Years 12 and 13 have a bespoke package of remote education. They access 'live' lessons when they self-isolate, and use specialist equipment such as digital cameras and microphones.

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

Yours sincerely

Alyson Middlemass
Her Majesty's Inspector