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Kieran Scanlon
Principal
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Dear Mr Scanlon

Ofsted remote visit to The Sir Robert Woodard Academy

Following my remote visit with Matthew Haynes, 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 and other school 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:

- At the time of the visit, half of the pupils in Year 10 were self-isolating. Since the start of term, approximately one quarter of pupils have had to learn from home for a period of time.
- All pupils are studying their usual range of subjects. You are currently making some adaptations to the practical aspects of a few subjects, for example in music. You aim to return to the full curriculum by summer 2021, if not sooner.
- Teachers have used a combination of formal and informal checks to find out what pupils remember and what learning they might need to revisit. Teachers have used this knowledge to add activities to lessons to help pupils catch up.
- In Years 7 to 9, English teachers are adapting lessons to help pupils develop their skills to read aloud and write at length.
- Most Year 11 pupils are continuing to study all of their planned examination courses. While you have reduced the number of courses for a very small number of pupils, you report that this decision was not related to COVID-19.
- In the sixth form, you have noted that students have gaps in their practical skills, in subjects such as dance, drama and media studies, because they were

not able to practise these during lockdown. Teachers have adapted planning to help students catch up with this missed learning.

- Teachers put lesson resources online so that any pupils who are self-isolating can follow their usual timetable of subjects and complete work in line with their peers.
- In October 2020, the Year 11 'bubble' learned from home for two weeks. Teachers taught live lessons for the subjects on the school's timetable. Where necessary, leaders provide electronic devices for pupils to use when learning 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 board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the Woodard Academies Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for West Sussex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Louise Walker
Her Majesty's Inspector