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Rhoda Flindall
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Flindall

Ofsted visit to Ashcroft High School

Following my visit with Isabel Davis, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 10 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.

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 the senior leadership team. 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:

- During our visit, pupils in Years 7 and 11 were studying at home. Since September 2020, every year group has been required to work at home on at least one occasion. These periods have typically lasted two weeks. Year 11 has needed to do so on three occasions.
- Staff are teaching all subjects within the school's curriculum. In some subjects, such as design and technology, religious education and English, leaders have changed the curriculum for this academic year. Leaders introduced a new personal, social and health education curriculum in September 2020 to help pupils learn about maintaining positive mental health.
- Staff have checked what pupils know in their subjects. These checks show that pupils need extra help in some subjects, including English and science.
- In Years 7 to 9, staff have focused on helping pupils improve their reading and spelling. Leaders have provided small-group sessions to help pupils catch up.
- In Years 10 and 11, leaders have planned extra support to start in January 2021 to help pupils catch up in science.
- For pupils studying at home, leaders aim to provide remote education that is similar to what pupils would experience in school. When whole year groups are studying at home, leaders expect staff to provide a mixture of resources for pupils to use and online teaching. Leaders have taken the views of parents into consideration when planning the school's approach to remote education. You told me that leaders have made sure that pupils have access to the online provision 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 Luton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Al Mistrano
Her Majesty's Inspector