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Alexander Crossman
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Crossman

Ofsted visit to The Charter School East Dulwich

Following my visit with Lisa Strong, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 3 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, members of your senior leadership team and four middle 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:

- A Year 9 'bubble' and a Year 8 class bubble were self-isolating at the time of the visit. Since September 2020, a small number of pupils have needed to work from home while isolating.
- Pupils are studying the usual range of subjects offered by the school. Some younger pupils have had less access to specialist rooms than normal and there is a reduced extra-curricular offer. The school day has been reorganised to allow for split lunchtimes. Because of this, personal, social and health education is now delivered during the 30-minute daily form time for all pupils instead of as a timetabled lesson. Leaders plan to return to usual arrangements as soon as possible.
- Teachers have assessed pupils' new starting points in all subjects. Leaders have found that pupils in Year 8 need help to develop their algebra skills in mathematics. In English, teachers are giving pupils extra support with their extended writing. Leaders have arranged more opportunities during the school day to help pupils catch up in English and mathematics.
- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 now have access to an additional hour of learning after school. Pupils use this time to consolidate their previous learning in supervised study sessions, personalised intervention, and teaching time for separate sciences. Teachers are reviewing how well pupils recall previous learning to inform current lessons. For example, you are now reteaching surds in Year 11 mathematics.
- Leaders provide digital access to remote education for all pupils who are self-isolating at home. Pupils in bubbles will have live or pre-recorded lessons using online resources. Teachers upload work for individual pupils who are isolating.

- Leaders are holding a remote education day each half term to give pupils the experience of working remotely. Pupils log in from home and staff teach them from school, following their normal timetable.

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 chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of The Charter Schools Educational Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Southwark. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sophie Welch
Her Majesty's Inspector