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Joanne Williams
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Williams

Ofsted remote visit to Ortu Hassenbrook Academy

Following my remote visit with Liz Smith, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 12 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 leaders, including leaders responsible for safeguarding pupils. 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 remote visit, a small number of pupils in Year 11 were isolating at home. No other groups of pupils have had to self-isolate since the start of term.
- Pupils are studying their usual range of subjects. You have adjusted the way in which some subjects are taught. For example, science practical lessons mostly take the form of teacher demonstrations and you have changed the order in which music content is taught.
- Curriculum leaders have identified the content they feel is the most important for pupils to learn. Teachers routinely check how well pupils have learned this content. Teachers adjust what they teach based on what this tells them.
- In Year 7, you provided all pupils with 'bridging' work to teach important concepts from the Year 6 curriculum.
- In Year 11, pupils have taken tests in English, mathematics and science. Teachers are using the information this gives them to identify and teach the content pupils have not learned well.
- You have plans in place to deliver the curriculum remotely through 'live' lessons, using video conferencing, if any 'bubbles' need to self-isolate. You intend for pupils to follow the same timetable as they would in school, with the same teachers. They will be given packs of resources to accompany the live lessons.

- If individuals within a bubble have to isolate, they attend the same lessons, via video link, as pupils attending school.

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 and the chief executive officer of the Ortu Federation multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Essex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Hemmings
Her Majesty's Inspector