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Jim Nixon
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Dear Mr Nixon

Ofsted visit to Ormiston Denes Academy

Following my visit with John Mitcheson, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 22 October 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 other members of your senior leadership team. 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 (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:

- The school opened fully to all pupils on 7 September 2020. Pupils from Years 7 and 11, and those who might find the return to school more difficult, came back earlier to help them acclimatise.
- Overall attendance is below what leaders would normally expect. To increase attendance, regular phone calls to parents, alongside the 'raising achievement support' rooms, are used to help pupils to return to school.
- At the time of this visit, 44 pupils from the Year 9 'bubble' were self-isolating as a result of COVID-19.
- Staff operate across 'bubbles', and pupils study their usual range of subjects in mainly non-specialist rooms. Specialist facilities such as science laboratories are available through a booking system.
- Staff use questioning, quizzes and pupils' work to establish what pupils can do. More formal assessments are used to check if gaps remain in pupils' learning. Targeted interventions, including the use of additional staff, support pupils who need to catch up.
- Year 7 pupils complete 'bridging units' to revisit some of the content that they may have missed in Year 6. Across other year groups, subject staff identify essential components from the previous year's work and adapt pupils' work in class to cover shortfalls.
- In the more practical-based subjects, pupils cover more of the theory elements earlier than they typically would.

- There are no visits and fewer after-school activities for pupils at present. In key stage 4, pupils studying vocational subjects such as health and social care do not have the same range of experiences in the community that they typically would.
- All Year 11 pupils have additional hourly sessions after school in English, mathematics and science three times a week.
- Pupils not in school receive the same range of provision that they would get in school via an online learning system. Staff have been trained and can provide remote learning in the future should this be needed.

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 Ormiston multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Suffolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Randall
Her Majesty's Inspector