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17 November 2020

Dominique Griffiths
Principal
Wistaston Academy
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Dear Ms Griffiths

Ofsted visit to Wistaston Academy

Following my visit with Sue Eastwood, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 20 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 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:

- The school reopened fully to all pupils on 2 September 2020. Children in the early years had an extended transition time for up to three weeks. You expect pupils to attend full time.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly in line with their usual attendance for this time of year.
- You explained that pupils are studying their usual curriculum.
- Teachers are checking the phonics knowledge of pupils in Years 1 to 3. You have noticed that pupils have not remembered some of the phonics content that was taught before March 2020. You are giving additional help to pupils who need to catch up where it is needed. You are also increasing reading opportunities across the curriculum, as well as giving extra opportunities for older pupils to practise their spellings.
- In mathematics, teachers' assessments showed that some pupils have forgotten key knowledge during the period when schools were only open to some pupils due to COVID-19 restrictions. You told us that teachers are

prioritising the areas of mathematics that pupils have not fully remembered, such as multiplication facts.

- You are checking what pupils have remembered in subjects other than English and mathematics. You have reorganised the way that some subjects are being taught to cover the skills and knowledge that pupils have missed.
- You described the systems in place to deliver the curriculum remotely should this be needed. These resources are aligned with the school's planned curriculum. You are currently evaluating these systems so that they are based on pupils' current learning and needs.

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 regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cheshire East. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Simon Hunter
Her Majesty's Inspector