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Christopher Taylor
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Dear Mr Taylor

Ofsted remote visit to Kirkburton Middle School

Following my remote visit with Claire Brown, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 1 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. 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 the 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 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:

- Since September, around 8 out of 10 pupils have spent at least one period of time working from home due to COVID-19. A small proportion of pupils have had to self-isolate on two or more occasions. One 'bubble' of Year 7 pupils was self-isolating at the time of the visit.
- All pupils are studying the usual range of subjects that make up the school's normal curriculum. Leaders have asked teachers to adjust curriculum plans, to make sure that pupils learn the key content that was missed from the previous year.
- A range of assessments have been used to check what pupils know and remember in English. You explained that teachers are using this information to make temporary curriculum adjustments to address gaps in pupils' knowledge. More lesson time is being spent rebuilding pupils' stamina for writing.
- Assessments used in mathematics have identified that some pupils have gaps in their knowledge of number. Leaders told us that teachers have increased their focus on basic skills in lessons, to improve pupils' mathematical fluency. You explained that parents and carers are encouraged to do additional mathematics work with pupils at home using online resources.
- In the wider curriculum subjects, such as art and computing, assessments have shown that some pupils need to recover the muscle strength that is needed for practical activities such as drawing, typing and using a computer

mouse. Teachers in these subjects are including activities in lessons which will give pupils more opportunities to rebuild their fine motor skills.

- Remote education is available for pupils who are working from home. You explained that you have systems in place to monitor pupils' well-being when they are self-isolating. Pupils working from home access a combination of live teaching and pre-recorded lessons that are similar to the curriculum being taught in 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 governing body, the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the MAST Academy multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Kirklees. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Graham Findlay
Her Majesty's Inspector