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Claire Bailey
Principal
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Smeaton Approach
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Dear Mrs Bailey

Ofsted visit to John Smeaton Academy

Following my visit with Kate Rowley, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 8 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 members of your senior leadership team, including the vice principals for quality of education and personal development, the designated safeguarding lead and the assistant principal with responsibility for the curriculum. 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 opened in stages. On 9 September 2020, Years 10 and 11 returned. Years 8 and 9 returned on 10 September 2020. Year 7 returned on 11 September 2020. All pupils were expected to attend full time from 14 September 2020.
- Attendance this year is broadly in line with the same point last year. The attendance of pupils with an education, health and care plan is higher than at the same point last year. On the day of our visit, one small 'bubble' of pupils had been sent home to self-isolate because of a positive COVID-19 case.
- Most pupils are studying the same breadth of subjects as normal. For some pupils in Year 11, there has been a change to allow them to focus on option subjects. You told us that you have altered the delivery of some lessons, such as food technology, to ensure that equipment can be cleaned after each pupil has used it.
- You have identified gaps in pupils' learning by looking at the content that was missed because of COVID-19 restrictions. You are also using ongoing assessments in lessons and more formal tests to assess specific subject gaps in pupils' knowledge.

- Leaders have carried out a reading assessment with all pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9. From this, leaders have identified gaps in some pupils' knowledge. Additional help is in place to support these pupils.
- In Years 10 and 11, leaders told us they have adapted the assessment calendar to allow them to identify, and teachers to address, gaps in pupils' learning in all subjects.
- Leaders told us that the curriculum for remote learning is updated weekly and follows the school curriculum. This can be accessed by pupils either digitally or through paper packs which are sent home if pupils do not have access to the technology 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 governing body, the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Leeds. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Vellensworth
Her Majesty's Inspector