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18 November 2020

Guy Nichols
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Dear Mr Nichols

Ofsted remote visit to The De Montfort School

Following my remote visit with Sandra Hayes, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 5 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 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 members of the senior and middle leadership teams. 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:

- You opened fully to all pupils on 9 September 2020. Pupils from each year group returned on a specific day in the week prior to this, as part of a planned phased return.
- Pupils' attendance has increased over time since the school opened fully to all pupils. It is in line with the normal attendance for this time of year.
- Pupils in Year 6 are being taught most of the subjects they normally would. You explained that some adaptations have been made to the curriculum. For example, pupils are not being taught computing or some aspects of design technology.
- You told us that reading is a priority for pupils in Year 6, and you have provided additional reading material for pupils to encourage them to read more. Teachers plan to address gaps in pupils' phonic knowledge in lessons through the usual curriculum. You explained that teachers are prioritising pupils' basic mathematical knowledge, and you have allocated additional time for pupils in mathematics and English.
- In Years 7, 8 and 9, all pupils are studying the subjects they normally would. You explained that in some subjects, such as art, computing, science and design technology, leaders have adapted the curriculum. For example, they are concentrating on the theoretical aspects initially and working towards planned practical activities later in the year.

- The vast majority of pupils in Year 11 are studying one subject fewer than they were last year. You told us that this was done in consultation with parents and pupils. You explained that this has given pupils additional teaching time in their remaining subjects.
- In Year 13, all students are continuing with the subjects that they were studying prior to September. You highlighted that pupils get additional lesson time to make sure that they cover the full content of their courses. In addition, leaders have made sure that all students in the sixth form have access to the curriculum remotely.
- In Years 10, 11 and 13, you described how teachers have formally assessed pupils to help identify what they know and remember. In other years, you told us that teachers are focusing on identifying gaps in pupils' knowledge and adapting plans to cover lost learning. In addition, leaders have plans to assess all pupils formally before the end of the autumn term.
- If pupils need to work at home, teachers provide them with the work from lessons through the school's website. You told us that there are plans in place if large numbers of pupils need to study remotely. This would be through a combination of online teacher support and resources for pupils. You highlighted that some pupils' lack of access to technology is a concern should they need to work at home. Leaders explained that they are using the COVID-19 catch-up premium to address this.

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

Yours sincerely

Ian Tustian
Her Majesty's Inspector