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Sherryl Bareham
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Bareham

Ofsted visit to The Dorcan Academy

Following my visit with Heather Barraclough, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 3 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.

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, the senior leadership team and the senior leader responsible for safeguarding. 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 to Year 7 pupils on 3 September 2020 and to all pupils on 4 September 2020. There are no pupils on part-time timetables.
- Attendance is below the normal attendance for this time of year. Leaders are working with the families of pupils who are reluctant to return.
- All pupils are studying their usual range of subjects. You have extended learning time in classrooms to minimise movement of staff around the school.
- In Year 7, you have extended pupils' learning time by one hour on two days of the week. During this time, pupils do extra-curricular activities such as coding, sports, Latin and gardening.
- Leaders have assessed pupils' new starting points. The curriculum is being adapted to accommodate any gaps identified in pupils' knowledge. For example, you have identified that Year 7 pupils do not use subject specific language in science. In addition, you are focusing on literacy and numeracy with Year 7 pupils.
- For Year 11 pupils, you have extended learning time on two days a week by one hour. They are continuing with their normal option choices. You have reduced the time allocated for the study of religious education.
- For the autumn term, the plan for future remote learning is complete in every subject. You say that it is aligned to the school's current curriculum.

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 Swindon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kathy Maddocks
Her Majesty's Inspector