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4 January 2021

Steve White  
Principal  
Houghton Regis Academy  
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Houghton Regis  
Dunstable  
Bedfordshire  
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Dear Mr White

### **Ofsted visit to Houghton Regis Academy**

Following my visit with Al Mistrano, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 8 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.

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, members of the senior leadership team (including the senior leaders responsible for safeguarding, behaviour and curriculum), the school attendance officer and curriculum leaders for mathematics and art and design. 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 was closed for 10 days during November 2020 due to COVID-19. Additionally, since the start of term, approximately 15% of pupils needed to learn from home for short periods of time.
- Pupils are studying the usual range of subjects within the school's curriculum. Teachers have changed the order that they teach some content. In food technology, for example, pupils are not carrying out practical activities until the spring term.
- Since September, you have given more teaching time to physical education and personal, social and health education. This is to support pupils' physical and emotional well-being. You have continued to provide a range of extra-curricular activities and clubs for year group 'bubbles.'
- In all subjects, teachers have checked what pupils remember from last year. Teachers have adapted their curriculum plans, to give pupils opportunities to revisit any knowledge where their understanding is less secure. Teachers are also including knowledge that was not taught during the spring and summer terms, in their teaching plans.
- Earlier this term, staff checked how well pupils can read. You found that more pupils lacked confidence in using their reading skills than is usual. You are

providing extra help for those pupils who need to catch up. You are giving all pupils more opportunities to practise their reading skills.

- When pupils were studying from home in November, teachers provided live lessons online, so that pupils could follow the same timetable as when at school. For individual pupils learning at home, you provide activities linked to what pupils would be learning in class. You told us that you have given a suitable device and resources to those pupils that need them to take part in remote education.

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, and the chief executive officer of the Greenwood Academies Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Central Bedfordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Paul Wilson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**