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Philip Latham
Chief Executive Officer
Macmillan Academy
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Dear Mr Latham

Ofsted visit to Macmillan Academy

Following my visit with Helen Lane, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 20 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 the senior leadership team, including 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 all pupils on 4 September 2020.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly in line with the normal attendance for this time of year. At the time of the visit, a number of partial 'bubbles' were isolating due to COVID-19. This included 453 pupils from Years 7 to 12.
- Pupils are studying most of the usual curriculum. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 do not currently learn food technology. Subject leaders have adapted the sequencing of curriculum content by moving some practical learning, in subjects such as science and design technology, to the summer term. Leaders explained that they have plans to return to the usual curriculum by summer 2021.
- You explained that staff have checked pupils' understanding of curriculum content this term using different approaches to assessment. After half term, pupils in Years 7 to 9 will sit external tests to explore further what they know and remember.
- You told us that, in English, Year 7 pupils require additional teacher support to improve their grammar and ensure they understand how to communicate information between individuals or groups in non-fiction writing. You have used some of the government's COVID-19 catch-up premium funding to appoint academic mentors to work closely with pupils who are behind in their learning.
- Pupils in Year 11 attend a mandatory additional English or mathematics lesson at the end of each day on Mondays and Tuesdays. Leaders told us that, during this time, pupils learn curriculum content that was missed or not understood fully during the period when schools were only open to some pupils due to

COVID-19 restrictions. Pupils have the option to attend additional after-school lessons in other optional subjects, such as geography or history, on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

- A small number of students studying A levels have decided to repeat Year 12. Students are continuing to learn their usual subjects.
- Leaders described to us the different approaches to providing remote education. These include lessons filmed using the school's recording studio, lesson slides that include a voice-over from staff, and/or paper-based materials that are sent home. Pupils not in school access learning resources via the school's digital software.

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

Yours sincerely

Lee Elliott
Her Majesty's Inspector