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Monica McLeod and Ian Gamble
Headteachers
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Dear Ms McLeod and Mr Gamble

Ofsted visit to North Herts Education Support Centre

Following my visit with Katherine Douglas, 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 both as co-headteachers and as leaders with the responsibility 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 fully opened to all pupils on 3 September 2020. Pupils are expected to attend full time. There are a few pupils who are currently attending on a part-time basis.
- You said that pupils are happy to be back, and that attendance is a little better for this time of year. Leaders and staff communicated with pupils and parents about the change in expectations regarding attendance from September 2020.
- Pupils are following the routines at the start of the day. You told us that pupils have adapted to the new behaviour expectations and rules put in place at the start of term.
- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are able to study the full range of courses they had chosen to gain relevant qualifications. There is more time scheduled in the weekly timetable for pupils to develop their English and mathematics knowledge and skills. Staff continue to use pupils' education, health and care plans to plan learning activities to support pupils' individual special educational needs.
- Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 are studying the usual range of subjects provided across the curriculum. External providers have changed some of the content in

vocational subjects, to follow current government guidance. Leaders and staff intend to check that pupils cover the learning expectations in practical subjects.

- There is a combination of online and printed resource packs for pupils to continue learning at home should the need arise. You are not currently providing remote learning for any pupils. Leaders are considering different ways to deliver the curriculum online in the future to help pupils when learning remotely.

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 management committee and the director of children's services for Hertfordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kim Hall
Her Majesty's Inspector