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9 October 2020

Joanne Sheen  
Headteacher  
Harvills Hawthorn Primary School  
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West Midlands  
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Dear Miss Sheen

### **Ofsted visit to Harvills Hawthorn Primary School**

Following my visit with Mark Howes, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 29 September 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 members of 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 fully to all pupils on 7 September 2020.
- Initially, attendance was higher than usual. Most pupils returned to school. Following the introduction of local restrictions, the number of pupils attending fell. However, attendance has risen again and is now broadly in line with what attendance was like this time last year. You contact individual families when children are absent from school.
- All pupils are studying most of their usual curriculum.
- There is a focus on key skills and knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers check what the pupils in their class know and can remember. You told us how instant help is provided for pupils who have gaps in their knowledge and understanding.
- The teaching of reading, especially developing a love of reading, continues to be a school priority. You told us that teachers read a book to their class every day. Pupils use the school reading books to practise their reading. A range of online books are also available.
- You have made some changes to when parts of the curriculum are taught. For example, in geography, visits are planned for later in the school year when local restrictions may have eased. Similarly, in music, pupils are not singing currently but continue to make music using a range of instruments.
- You are using your online platform to set homework tasks. Plans are in place for the normal school timetable to be offered remotely should this be needed

because of COVID-19. The special educational needs coordinator is looking into how the specialist support needed by some pupils can be provided 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 governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Sandwell. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Nicola Harwood  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**