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Susan Preston
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Preston

Ofsted visit to Gillingham Primary School

Following my visit with Kathy Maddocks, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 1 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 the senior leadership team, one of whom is 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 7 September 2020. No pupils are on part-time timetables due to COVID-19.
- Attendance is below the normal attendance for this time of year. There were no 'bubbles' isolating at the time of the visit.
- You are not able to offer the full curriculum because of health and safety measures in place. For example, pupils are not able to take part in swimming, indoor physical education or computing.
- Leaders have checked pupils' new starting points. Reading is a priority and time given to the teaching of reading has been extended. Staff have had recent retraining in the teaching of phonics.
- In mathematics, you are focusing on mental mathematics and recall.
- Within the wider curriculum, subject terminology in geography is a focus. Personal, social, health and economic education remains a high profile.
- You are planning remote learning that is aligned to the school's curriculum. You will support parents in this type of teaching when necessary.

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

Yours sincerely

Heather Barraclough
Her Majesty's Inspector