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H Sarai
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Sarai

Ofsted visit to Bantock Primary School

Following my visit with Martin Pye, 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, the deputy headteacher, parent ambassadors and some members of staff responsible for managing subjects and phases of the school. We discussed safeguarding with you and the deputy headteacher as you are both responsible for leading this aspect of the school's work. 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:

- You opened the school on 2 September 2020. All pupils are expected to attend on a full-time basis.
- Attendance is similar to the same time last year. Some pupils, particularly from disadvantaged or vulnerable families, are not attending, and this is a similar situation to last year. You and the parent ambassadors work with many local agencies to communicate to families the school's expectations for attendance.
- Your staff have adapted some curriculum content in practical subjects, such as music and physical education, to ensure that pupils handle resources hygienically. The staff are focusing on helping pupils to adapt to new routines, and on reassuring them and their families that school is returning to normal. You and your staff told us that this has not disrupted their intentions to teach the school's normal range of curriculum subjects in line with government guidance.
- Teachers have carried out checks to decide which areas of reading and phonics need to be a focus of their lessons. Leaders have identified reading comprehension and vocabulary as areas that require extra attention. Teachers are providing more one-to-one or group support for pupils who have fallen behind the most in reading.

- Teachers have checked pupils' mathematical knowledge. You told us that the information that your staff have gathered shows that place value and mental arithmetic are areas where pupils have fallen behind the most. Teachers are re-visiting these aspects of mathematics more intensively, using targeted support with individual pupils and groups.
- In other subjects, teachers are focusing on reading with understanding and the quality of pupils' writing in different topics. You and your staff are continuing to plan the school's normal curriculum, using a range of topics and subjects, including a modern foreign language (French). Leaders told us that the most able pupils in Years 5 and 6 are keen to record notes about their lessons so that they can remember more and take it home to do more reading and research.
- You have been using various online platforms to keep in touch with pupils and their families. You told us that these forms of remote education help you and the staff to keep in touch, particularly with vulnerable and disadvantaged families. You try to support those families who are hard to reach or do not have online access. You believe that the school will be able to continue providing remote education, using these platforms in case of any future COVID-19 restrictions.

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

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou
Her Majesty's Inspector