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Rossana O' Reilly
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Dear Miss O' Reilly

Ofsted visit to Willowdown Primary Academy

Following my visit with Jen Southall, 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, the senior leader responsible for safeguarding, the special educational needs coordinator, and the pupil premium champion. 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:

- Willowdown Primary Academy opened to all pupils on 8 September 2020.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly in line with the usual attendance figures seen at this time of year.
- All pupils are studying every subject in the curriculum. You have made personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education the top priority, to help pupils settle back into the school. However, there are practical aspects of some subjects, including science, and design and technology, which are currently 'on hold', due to government guidance on COVID-19. You expect pupils to return to their usual curriculum by the summer term 2021.
- Teachers have used tests to determine what pupils know and can remember in reading, writing and mathematics. This is to help teachers gain a better understanding of what pupils need to learn in order to catch up quickly.
- Reading and phonics 'catch-up' is a priority, including in the Nursery. Teachers are using assessment information to plan work to target gaps in pupils' knowledge. Teachers are also focused on extending pupils' vocabulary.
- Teachers have identified key aspects of mathematics that pupils need to secure now they have returned to school. These include improving pupils' knowledge of shape, space and measure, and their ability to solve mathematical problems.

- You have plans to deliver the curriculum remotely, should this be needed. Teachers know how to use online programs to deliver the curriculum and maintain communication between home and school.

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 chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools' commissioner and the director of children's services for Somerset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Stewart Gale
Her Majesty's Inspector