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Joanne Mappin
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Dear Mrs Mappin

Ofsted visit to Poolsbrook Primary Academy

Following my visit with Shaheen Hussain, Seconded Inspector, 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 head of school, the leader responsible for safeguarding and the curriculum leader for mathematics. 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, Her Majesty's Inspectors (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 3 September 2020. Pupils are attending full time.
- Attendance is above normal for this time of year. Leaders supported families who were reluctant to send their children back to school, and all have now returned. At the time of the visit, no 'bubbles' were isolating.
- Pupils are studying most of their usual curriculum. In some subjects, the content is restricted for safety reasons. These restrictions apply to swimming, singing lessons, cookery activities and external visitors. Leaders say they plan to resume these activities by summer term 2021.
- Leaders and staff are in the process of checking pupils' new starting points, in view of what was missed during lockdown. To date, they have carried out checks in reading, phonics and mathematics, in all year groups.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 3 have missed important aspects of phonics teaching. Leaders are providing increased adult support for phonics sessions. They have also purchased new reading books which match the chosen phonics scheme.

- In mathematics, staff are prioritising multiplication tables and basic number facts in Years 3 to 6, as a result of the recent assessments.
- Later in the autumn term, when assessments are complete, leaders plan to provide catch-up plans in all other subjects.
- Leaders have developed plans to provide remote learning, both online or in paper form. They have carried out a survey to find out what equipment is available for pupils to use at home. Leaders feel they are in a strong position to provide remote learning at short notice, if the need arises as a result of COVID-19.

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

Yours sincerely

Christine Watkins
Her Majesty's Inspector