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Tim Smith
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Dear Mr Smith

Ofsted visit to Beeches Primary School

Following my visit with Charlie Fordham, 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 two deputy headteachers, the attendance and admissions officer, the two special educational needs coordinators (one of whom is also a deputy headteacher), the family support worker and the curriculum leader. 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:

- All pupils in Years 2, 4 and 6 returned to school on 7 September 2020, the first day of the autumn term 2020, full time. On 8 September, pupils in Years 1, 3 and 5 started school full time. Children in the Reception Year will be full time from 1 October having attended half days for the past two weeks, as is the usual pattern.
- Pupils' attendance is lower than expected for this time of year. Some families have not yet returned from holidays abroad. Most of the pupils who are in school attend each day. At the time of this visit, pupils in one of the Year 6 classes were isolating at home. Pupils in one of the Year 5 classes, and a small group of pupils from another class, were isolating at home for two weeks earlier this term.
- Leaders have adapted the curriculum and aim to return to the full curriculum by the start of the summer term 2021. All subjects are covered for all year groups. Some content within some subjects has been moved around, to be covered at a later stage, for example the learning that would go alongside school trips and productions, which are currently on hold.
- Teachers are using their usual systems for checking what pupils can remember from their learning last year. Assessments are not yet complete.
- Where gaps in reading and phonics have been identified already, teachers are revisiting the skills needed, such as how to infer meaning from what is being read. Current arrangements mean that reading books are not sent home in the usual way. Extra books have been purchased and facility has been made for books to be read on screen.

- The curriculum for mathematics continues to be covered in the usual order. Previous learning is consolidated alongside new learning. Sharing resources to practise concepts is less frequent than usual.
- Children starting school for the first time in the Reception class have a full early years curriculum. The curriculum for pupils in Year 1 is the one that has changed the most. Pupils missed out on the early years curriculum and now are given opportunities to gain the skills and knowledge needed to help them catch up. There are currently no school trips or before- and after-school clubs.
- There are some children that have been learning from home, for a week or two, because they are in a 'bubble' that is isolating at home. The pupils have a structured day, each day, with their usual staff, all done online. This approach will be used if other bubbles are sent home in the future.

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 Peterborough local authority. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Heather Yaxley
Her Majesty's Inspector