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02 November 2020

Julie Starkiss  
Headteacher  
Bengeo Primary School  
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Hertford  
Hertfordshire  
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Dear Mrs Starkiss

### **Ofsted visit to Bengeo Primary School**

Following my visit with Wendy Varney, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 13 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 you, your deputy headteacher and the pastoral support assistant. 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 on 3 September 2020 for all pupils from Years 1 to 6 to attend full time. Children in Reception came to school for half a day for the first week. They started to attend full time on 7 September 2020.
- Pupils' attendance is above the normal attendance compared to this time last year.
- Pupils are studying all subjects across the curriculum. Teachers are planning more opportunities for learning outside to help pupils sustain their concentration throughout the school day.
- Your key stage 1 team has carried out checks to determine how well pupils have remembered their phonics. Teachers are planning additional support to help some pupils catch up where they have fallen behind. Owing to lost reading time during the spring and summer of 2020, leaders have implemented additional reading time for older pupils who need more practice.
- In mathematics, teachers have undertaken similar checks on pupils' knowledge. They found that pupils have remembered their times tables. Teachers are spending more time explaining tricky concepts such as fractions to help pupils secure their understanding.
- Teachers are finding out what important knowledge pupils have remembered. This is across all subjects in the curriculum. Leaders have changed the order in

which the content in some subjects is taught, such as in music and physical education (PE).

- You have devised plans for delivering the curriculum remotely should you need to. All teachers have received training in the use of your chosen digital platform.

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

Yours sincerely

Steve Mellors  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**