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Karen Boardman
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Dear Miss Boardman

Ofsted visit to St Barnabas Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Following my visit with Michael Reeves, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 6 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 and your early years and key stage 1 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:

- The school opened to all pupils on 9 September 2020. All pupils are expected to attend full time. You organised a staggered start for your children in Reception to help them get used to school routines.
- Pupil attendance is higher than usual for this time of year. Pupils who were self-isolating in September are now back in school.
- You told us that pupils are largely studying their usual curriculum. However, you are not currently teaching Spanish to pupils in key stage 2. This is because you are operating key stage 'bubbles' to help keep staff and children safe.
- You explained that teachers are checking pupils' understanding across a range of subjects, through short quizzes at the start of lessons. You said that pupils have gaps in their reading and phonics knowledge. You are dedicating more time to the teaching of reading and phonics to help pupils catch up.
- You said that teachers have identified pupils' recall of multiplication facts as an area in need of strengthening. You believe this to be because of lost learning time during the period when school was only open to some pupils, due to COVID-19 restrictions. You are spending more time in lessons teaching this and providing opportunities during the day for pupils to practise.

- You explained that you have made pupils' mental health and well-being a curriculum priority, and that teachers are focusing on social and emotional aspects of learning. Teachers are providing more time for children to talk about their feelings.
- You have systems in place to deliver the curriculum remotely. Since returning to school in September, you have reviewed this and now have plans to deliver a mixture of live lessons and learning activities should the school need to close in 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 director of education for the diocese of York and the director of children's services for York local authority. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Pearce
Her Majesty's Inspector