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Alison Wootton
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Wootton

Ofsted visit to Withymoor Primary School

Following my visit with Jonathan Leonard, 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 your deputy headteacher, who is also responsible for safeguarding, two assistant headteachers, the inclusion manager and the business administrator. 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 3 September 2020. Children in the Reception class had a phased return until 16 September 2020.
- Leaders told us that pupils' attendance is broadly in line with the normal attendance for this time of year.
- Pupils across the school are studying all of the usual subjects. You anticipate all pupils will return to their full curriculum by spring 2021. You have changed some aspects of practical subjects. Some school clubs have resumed but educational visits and non-essential visitors are currently suspended.
- Teachers are carrying out assessment checks in English and mathematics in Years 1 to 6. You intend to use this information to teach the things pupils have missed and provide support for any pupils who may have fallen behind.
- Leaders told us that reading is a whole-school priority. Additional teaching time for phonics has been introduced for some pupils in Year 1. You expect all pupils to read regularly and books are sent home for pupils to practise.
- Teachers are assessing pupils' mathematical understanding to check their knowledge and skills. Leaders have decided to focus on pupils' reasoning skills.

Leaders said that pupils with special educational needs have been more successful with remote learning in mathematics than in English.

- Leaders have prioritised history, geography and science this year in the wider curriculum. Teachers are covering any missed content as it arises and modifying how they teach some aspects. For example, science experiments are teacher led rather than pupils investigating in groups.
- You have recently adopted a digital resource to support remote learning and have used this for pupils who are self-isolating. Curriculum content mirrors that provided for other pupils in school. You plan to extend online learning, should this be needed in the future, and ensure that all pupils have access to the necessary equipment.

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

Yours sincerely

Heather Simpson
Her Majesty's Inspector