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Heather Phillips
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Ms Phillips

Ofsted visit to Blakesley Hall Primary School

Following my visit with Jane Spilsbury, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 8 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 members of the senior leadership team, including the senior leader responsible for safeguarding. 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, and you expect pupils to attend full time.
- You said that attendance is currently lower than normal for this time of year. You are working with several families to encourage regular attendance. At the time of our visit, pupils in Years 1 and 2 were working at home because those year groups were required to self-isolate.
- Pupils in all years are studying almost all their usual subjects. You have chosen not to teach music and languages at the moment. However, you intend to resume teaching these subjects in January 2021.
- Since the start of term, you have been assessing what pupils know, to find out where they might have fallen behind in their learning. These checks have focused mainly on English and mathematics so far.
- As a result of your assessments, you have put in place extra phonics lessons for pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. You think that most pupils in other year groups have kept up well with their reading. In Years 3 to 6, you are focusing on getting pupils back into the habit of writing extended pieces of work.
- You believe that most pupils' basic mathematical skills have not suffered because of the time they spent not in school. However, because pupils have

missed out on learning new mathematical material, you are giving more time to teaching mathematics each day.

- When pupils are working from home, teachers set work each day using the school's online learning system. Pupils submit their work online, and teachers provide feedback using the same system. You provide printed work packs for any pupils who find it difficult to access their work online. You will continue to use this system whenever pupils have to work from home.

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

Yours sincerely

Alun Williams
Her Majesty's Inspector