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Carol Taylor
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Taylor

Ofsted visit to Furness Vale Primary School

Following my visit with Steve Varnam, 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. 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 7 September 2020. All pupils attend full time.
- Attendance is below that typically seen for this point in the year.
- You introduced a new curriculum in September. Pupils are studying the full range of subjects in the school's curriculum. In physical education, pupils have not yet recommenced swimming lessons.
- You have identified that many pupils have fallen behind in reading and phonics. Teachers are dedicating more time to revisiting the phonic knowledge that pupils have forgotten. Pupils have been given books that help them to practise and apply this knowledge.
- Teachers have carried out checks in mathematics. These show that some pupils have fallen behind in their knowledge and understanding of number. Teachers are giving these pupils extra support to help them catch up.
- You know that some pupils need help to support their well-being following lockdown. You have made personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education a priority. Teachers have not yet checked pupils' new starting points in subjects other than English and mathematics.

- When pupils are self-isolating, you send work home. This work is similar to what pupils would learn if they were in school. You are training staff so that they can provide some remote education online, and you are planning to check what equipment or support families may need to access this.

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

Yours sincerely

Vic Wilkinson
Her Majesty's Inspector