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Alexa O’Gara
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs O’Gara

Ofsted visit to Nunthorpe Primary Academy

Following my visit with Michael Reeves, Her Majesty’s Inspector (HMI), to your school on 22 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, the deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher. 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:

- You opened the school to all pupils on 1 September 2020. You expect all pupils to attend full time.
- Attendance is slightly higher than usual for your school at this time of year.
- You told us that pupils are studying all subjects that make up the school's usual curriculum. You explained that teachers are making changes to the order and content of subjects. For example, in music you have decided not to teach singing and in science practical work is limited. You intend to return to a normal curriculum by Summer 2021.
- You explained that teachers are using assessments in lessons and their knowledge of the pupils to inform their mathematics plans. Where pupils need support, you told us that teachers and teaching assistants are using time at the start of the day to provide them with extra help.
- You said that you have increased the amount of time that teachers spend teaching phonics in Year 1 and 2. Teachers in these year groups are using fortnightly assessments to inform their phonics teaching. In Years 3 to 6 your checks show that pupils could not remember some aspects of grammar, so you are providing these children with additional help in class.
- You described the plans you have in place to review the curriculum in subjects such as history and geography. You intend to identify the knowledge and skills the children have missed and use this information as a basis for future planning.

- You described the system that you have in place for remote education. When year group 'bubbles' are isolating, teachers offer online lessons that pupils can access at home. You explained that you have plans in place to provide the equipment required for all pupils to take part where this is necessary.

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, chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the Ironstone Multi-Academy Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Redcar and Cleveland. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Pearce
Her Majesty's Inspector