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Kate Docherty
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Dear Mrs Docherty

Ofsted visit to Rivacre Valley Primary School

Following my visit with Paul Tomkow, 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 and the senior leadership team. 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 pupils on 2 September 2020. All pupils are expected to attend full time.
- Pupils' attendance is currently higher than it was at this time last year.
- Pupils are studying the full range of subjects except for Spanish. You plan to reintroduce this subject during the spring term.
- You have prioritised support for pupils' mental health and well-being. You believe that this has had a positive impact on pupils' transition back to full-time education.
- Teachers across the school have assessed pupils' reading abilities to identify their new starting points. These checks have shown that many pupils are well below where you would expect them to be at this point in the year. Teachers are providing additional support to help them catch up.
- Teachers' checks have identified that pupils are struggling with some aspects of mathematics.
- Pupils now spend time each day working on topics such as place value and mental arithmetic to help them rebuild their knowledge of these mathematical areas.
- You recognise that pupils have missed the planned content in many subjects due to the disruption caused by COVID-19 restrictions. Teachers are planning to check pupils' knowledge in subjects other than English and mathematics, and then cover any missed learning in each subject later in the year.

- You told us that staff have been trained to lead remote learning in the event of any future restrictions. You have developed online and paper-based resources that match your current curriculum. You anticipate that this will enable pupils to continue their education at home should the need arise.

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 Cheshire West and Chester. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Tomlinson
Her Majesty's Inspector