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2 November 2020

Mrs Susie Arnold
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Arnold

Ofsted visit to Pollington-Balne Church of England Primary School

Following my visit 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. I did not undertake the usual range of inspection activities and I was 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, I spoke to you, and your senior leadership team, including the leader responsible for safeguarding. I 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 fully to all pupils on 7 September 2020.
- Pupils' attendance is at a similar level to where it was this time last year.
- Pupils are not studying their usual range of subjects. They are not receiving music, art, design technology and certain aspects of the science and physical education curriculums. Leaders say this is because they have prioritised the teaching of reading, writing, mathematics, religious education and personal, social and health education (PSHE), coupled with concerns they have over the safe delivery of those practical subjects. Leaders have plans for pupils to gradually return to their usual curriculum by summer term 2021.
- Leaders have checked pupils' new starting points and realised that gaps have opened up in pupils' knowledge and skills in several subjects during the spring and summer terms 2020, when the school was not open to all pupils. Hence, Reception are focusing on recovering lost ground in pupils' early reading and phonics, while in years 1 and 2, the focus is on pupils' phonic knowledge. In years 3 to 6, the focus is on the fluency of pupils' reading. There are common gaps in years 1 to 6 in handwriting, spelling and arithmetic.
- Leaders' assessments indicated that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils needed to be identified for further, intensive support. This includes working one-to-one with specialist staff.
- Leaders explained that they are re-visiting the wider curriculum on a rota basis in subjects such as history, to cover subject content they have missed. The

focus on PSHE has been to support pupils' social, mental and emotional well-being, which leaders believe has been impacted as a result of COVID-19.

- If the school shuts in the future due to further restrictions, leaders plan to deliver a mix of 'live' remote teaching and supported online sessions. They plan to mirror their usual curriculum as far as possible.

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 director of education for the Diocese of Sheffield, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for the East Riding of Yorkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Young

Senior Her Majesty's Inspector