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Kate Charlton
Acting Headteacher
Stanley Burnside Primary School
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Stanley
County Durham
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Dear Ms Charlton

Ofsted visit to Stanley Burnside Primary School

Following my visit with Graham Findlay, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 7 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 acting deputy headteacher and senior leaders, 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 pupils on 2 September 2020. Children in Nursery and Reception followed the school's usual procedures by building up their time in school across the first three weeks of term. All pupils and children are now expected to attend full time.
- Attendance is broadly in line with the school's normal attendance for this time of year. You told us that you have reassured and supported pupils who were anxious about returning to school safely.
- Leaders said that pupils are studying all the usual subjects in the primary curriculum. They have made some changes that they feel are necessary to meet COVID-19 safety requirements. This includes adaptations to the way that aspects of music, PE and modern foreign languages are taught.
- Leaders reported that English, mathematics, science and pupils' mental and physical health are currently being prioritised. You said staff are checking for any essential, lost or missed learning in each area. Extra reading and phonics sessions have started to help some pupils catch up.
- You explained that teachers are checking what pupils know and remember in subjects such as geography and history. You said that you talked to parents about what pupils have been learning at home. This has helped teachers to plan and sequence learning tasks.
- You said that you aim to offer remote learning that meets the differing needs of pupils. You told us that some pupils prefer online learning opportunities,

others like paper-based work and some enjoy a mix of both. You are exploring ways to offer a balance of approaches.

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 County Durham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Fiona Manuel
Her Majesty's Inspector