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Lynn George
Headteacher
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Bishop Auckland
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Dear Mrs George

Ofsted visit to Prince Bishops Community Primary School

Following my visit with Steve Wren, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 1 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, your deputy headteacher and your 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:

- The school opened to all pupils on 2 September 2020. All pupils are expected to attend on a full-time basis.
- Attendance is above that of the same period last year.
- Pupils are studying the school's usual range of subjects. Leaders are aware that some topics were not covered during the period when schools were only open to some pupils due to COVID-19 restrictions. Leaders shared that they have plans in place to address these topics in more detail in the future.
- Staff are working with small groups of children in the early years to assess children's needs and to support their learning and development.
- Teachers have carried out assessments to check pupils' phonics knowledge and their wider reading abilities. In some cases, teachers have identified gaps in pupils' reading abilities. Additional support is being provided for pupils who may have fallen behind.
- Leaders explained that the mathematics scheme that teachers use helps them to assess gaps in what pupils know. Teachers are using this information to plan the curriculum and any additional support that pupils may need.
- Leaders are making sure that the full wider curriculum is taught. In some cases, teachers are adapting teaching in subjects such as science, music and physical education so that practical elements can be taught safely.

- Teachers plan the curriculum so that work that is delivered in school can also be delivered remotely. Teachers are recording commentaries to support some of the learning materials that are sent home.

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

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Kirtley
Her Majesty's Inspector