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Elizabeth Maycock
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Maycock

Ofsted visit to Little Waltham Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Following my visit with Hannah Stoten, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 6 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 one of the class teachers. 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:

- Pupils in Years 1 to 6 started back at school on 2 September 2020. Children joining Reception had a phased part-time introduction to school. They began to attend full time on 21 September 2020.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly similar to attendance at the same time last year.
- Pupils are learning the usual range of subjects across the curriculum. Some elements have been adapted. For instance, pupils are taking part in the Daily Mile to make up for parts of the physical education curriculum that are currently not being taught.
- The phonics programme of teaching has picked up from March 2020, when the school partially closed due to COVID-19 restrictions. This is to enable pupils to catch up on essential learning to develop their reading.
- Through their daily teaching, staff are assessing where pupils are in their learning. Once teachers have a full picture of where learning may have been lost, leaders aim to plan any necessary additional support for pupils.
- For the most part, teaching is following the usual sequence of the curriculum for this time of the school year. Some more practical elements of teaching and learning have been moved to later in the school year. This is being kept under review as the term progresses.
- Leaders have decided to focus on the number elements of the mathematics curriculum this term. You feel it is important to embed the essential number

knowledge that pupils need, including knowledge of times tables and number bonds.

- You plan to reintroduce the remote learning methods that were developed during the partial closure of the school, should the need arise. These methods include the use of digital teaching, activities and resources.

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 Chelmsford, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Essex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Winter
Her Majesty's Inspector