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Steve Cumbo
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Cumbo

Ofsted visit to Lower Darwen Primary School

Following my visit with Claire Cropper, 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 the well-being and learning mentors. 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 Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 pupils on 3 September 2020. The school opened fully to all pupils on 4 September 2020.
- Attendance is higher than it would usually be at this time of year.
- You have prioritised the teaching of personal, social, health and economic education. Teachers are deciding when it is appropriate to resume all subjects with their classes. You are planning for pupils to return to their usual curriculum by January 2021.
- Teachers have checked where pupils are in their reading. You are using this information to identify the content pupils need to cover to catch up on lost learning.
- You have checked pupils' new starting points in mathematics. Teachers have changed the sequence of some parts of the mathematics curriculum, to help pupils to catch up on learning they have lost. For example, in Year 6, pupils are spending more time learning geometry.
- You have started to make checks on pupils' knowledge in other curriculum subjects. Staff intend to make further checks later this term.
- Should it be needed as a result of COVID-19, you are developing plans to deliver the curriculum remotely. You have invested in new hardware and software to support these plans. You are providing support for staff, to improve their expertise in teaching pupils who are unable to attend school.

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 Blackburn with Darwen. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Stevens
Her Majesty's Inspector