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09 November 2020

Adam Evans  
Headteacher  
Minehead First School  
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Somerset  
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Dear Mr Evans

### **Ofsted visit to Minehead First School**

Following my visit with Matthew Barnes, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 22 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 and the senior leadership team. 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 7 September 2020. Children joining the school in the Reception Year started gradually and were attending full-time from 14 September. The majority of pupils are now attending on a full-time basis.
- Attendance is now better than it was at the same time last year.
- Pupils have returned to their normal curriculum and study all of the national curriculum subjects. You have made minor adaptations to the order in which some subject content is taught. Staff are exploring how they can best provide extra-curricular activities while maintaining your COVID-19 safety arrangements.
- At the beginning of the autumn term, you checked what knowledge and skills pupils have remembered from the last academic year. You have concluded that some pupils' fluency in reading is stronger than their comprehension skills. This is now a key focus, particularly in Years 3 and 4. Teachers have also selected books that encourage pupils to discuss wider issues that they may have experienced during the partial closure of the school due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- You assessed pupils' mathematical skills on their return to school in September. As a result, you have adjusted the curriculum to support pupils to refresh their understanding of what they studied last year, particularly their learning of place value. You are also focusing on how pupils can apply their mathematical knowledge to real-life situations.

- In the wider curriculum, you are beginning to identify where the gaps in pupils' subject knowledge lie. You are using this information to adjust your curriculum plans so that pupils cover the important subject content they need.
- You have used your experiences of providing remote education to develop teachers' confidence to deliver your usual curriculum in this way if needed in the future.

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 interim executive board, the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the West Somerset Academies Trust (WSAT), the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Somerset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sarah McGinnis  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**