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10 November 2020

Cheryl Chalkley  
Headteacher  
Mersham Primary School  
Church Lane  
Mersham  
Kent  
TN25 6NU

Dear Mrs Chalkley

### **Ofsted visit to Mersham Primary School**

Following my visit with Alice Roberts, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 20 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 and the curriculum lead for mathematics. 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:**

- You opened the school to pupils on 2 September 2020. You expected all pupils to attend fully from this date, except children in Reception, who had a phased start before attending full time from 14 September 2020.
- Pupils' attendance is in line with what it normally is at this time of year.
- Pupils are studying their usual range of subjects. In some subjects, such as music and physical education, staff have made amendments to the normal subject content. It is your intention that pupils will have full access to all curriculum subjects by the summer term 2021.
- Teachers are constantly evaluating pupils' loss of learning due to any lack of schooling because of COVID-19. This includes in reading and in pupils' use of their phonics knowledge to develop early reading skills. Support is available within class 'bubbles' to those pupils who need it to help them catch up.
- In mathematics, teachers have checked pupils' new starting points and are planning learning based on this. They are continuing to monitor the gaps in pupils' knowledge as the term progresses and are providing additional support where needed.
- Staff have also checked pupils' starting points across the wider curriculum. This includes assessing children who are new to Reception. Staff are using the information to inform their teaching and to plan additional support for pupils who need it.

- You have plans to enhance the school's remote learning offer based on your experience during the summer lockdown period and what parents, pupils and staff have told you since September. Your plans include introducing more online learning, as well as providing a range of other resources to support pupils' learning at home, should this be needed.

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

Yours sincerely

Clive Close  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**