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George Athanasiou
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Athanasiou

Ofsted visit to Great Sampford Community Primary School

Following my visit with Kim Hall, 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, your deputy headteacher and two members of your office staff. 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 fully to most pupils on 3 September 2020. Reception children built up their attendance over the first two weeks. All pupils were attending school full time by 14 September 2020.
- You told us that pupils have returned to school keen to learn. You are spending time establishing routines for the younger children in Reception. Attendance is slightly lower than it was at the same time last year.
- You are planning to offer your full curriculum by summer 2021.
- You have checked where pupils are in their learning in reading, writing and mathematics.
- While pupils were not in school, you provided them with reading books. Pupils also had access to books online and other reading resources that you provided. For pupils in Years 1 and 2, you have checked which sounds they can remember and have adapted the teaching to address any needs that have arisen. For older pupils, you have changed your choice of books to match pupils' starting points this term.
- In mathematics, you have found that some pupils have gaps in their understanding of mathematical reasoning and fractions. Teachers are helping those pupils who need to catch up, in smaller groups.
- You have included local educational visits as part of your curriculum this year. You have also included, in subjects such as physical education, more outside

learning. You intend to check pupils' learning across the wider curriculum at the end of this term.

- You have already set up and used a remote learning system. You told us that most pupils in your school accessed your system over the spring and summer terms. You made sure that pupils had the necessary skills to access your online learning, as well as resources to take home to help them with learning. You told us that all pupils who are unable to be in school will be able to access learning remotely, if the need arises.

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

Yours sincerely

Cindy Impey
Her Majesty's Inspector