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Peter Bloomfield
Executive Principal
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Dear Mr Bloomfield

Ofsted visit to Great Yarmouth Primary Academy

Following my visit with John Randall, 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, the vice-principal, the two assistant principals, the senior safeguarding leader and the school's primary curriculum associate. 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 returned to school full time on Monday 7 September 2020. Children in the Nursery and Reception attended part time for the first few weeks of term and full time since then.
- Pupils' attendance is higher than it usually is for this time of the school year.
- Other than in Year 1, where pupils are not taught history and geography, all of the usual subjects are taught. In Year 1, the extra time is allocated to areas of learning missed in Reception last year. The arrangement will be reviewed at the end of term.
- The activities within each subject have been streamlined to focus on the things that leaders have identified as the most important for future learning. A particular priority is pupils' understanding and use of the most important subject-specific vocabulary. An extra 20 minutes each day is devoted to teaching literacy and mathematics. The intention is that all pupils will return to what is usually taught within each subject by the summer term 2021.
- In addition to the ongoing assessments of pupils' learning in class, teachers have completed their checks across all subjects, focusing on what pupils have learned recently.
- Leaders found that pupils are not reading with the speed and accuracy that they used to. In spelling and grammar, and speaking and listening, pupils have lost some of the skills that they had before. A lot of money has been spent on books for pupils to read in school and at home.

- In mathematics, leaders found that pupils have lost some of their ability and confidence to make calculations. Teachers are revisiting skills that would have been taught and practised last year.
- Children new to the Nursery and Reception have not had the usual run-up to starting school. The children get extra help to settle to routines, to learn to listen carefully and to play together. More time than usual is given to pronouncing sounds and words accurately.
- The curriculum for physical education has been reordered so that activities can take place outdoors this term. The science curriculum has been reorganised so that as much practical work can take place as possible. There are no educational visits or visitors. Music is now taught by a specialist teacher. There is no singing in music lessons and no school choir; the use of musical instruments is limited. Personal, social and health education is being revised so that pupils' personal skills are reinforced more frequently.
- Leaders have plans for future remote learning, should this be necessary and have bought a lot of resources in preparation for this. 'Watch this, read this, do this' is the format for remote learning, and will be online for all. The work will be in line with the timetable that would be for the class at the time. Leaders have asked all families what they need for their children to access online learning at home.

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 board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Inspiration Trust (a multi-academy trust), the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Norfolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Heather Yaxley
Her Majesty's Inspector