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Elaine Williams
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Williams

Ofsted visit to Pennyhill Primary School

Following my visit with Jonathan Leonard, 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 and the deputy headteacher. 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 pupils in Years 1 to 6 on 2 September 2020. These year groups were expected to attend full time. Children in Reception and Nursery classes had a gradual start to school, with all children's attendance following its usual pattern from 21 September 2020.
- Overall attendance since the start of term is a bit lower than normal for this time of year.
- Pupils are studying their usual subjects, but some subjects have been given greater emphasis. This term, you are providing more physical education and personal, social and health education than usual. In addition, staff have changed the way they teach music and art so that pupils do not have to share resources.
- Teachers have checked what pupils know and have altered curriculum plans to cover work that was missed in the summer term. Some topics have been merged together in order to fit everything in. You hope to return to your usual curriculum by summer 2021.
- You have noticed that pupils have got out of the habit of reading and writing regularly. In response, you are prioritising these subjects and have purchased more reading books. You have also put additional phonics support in place to help pupils catch up.
- Pupils' mathematical knowledge is broadly in line with what you would normally expect. However, teachers have noticed that pupils' mathematical reasoning has slipped back.

- Staff are ready to provide a mix of online and paper resources for pupils to learn at home should this be needed. These home-learning packs are intended to support the school's usual curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Martin Pye
Her Majesty's Inspector