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Chris Johnson
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Johnson

Ofsted visit to Phoenix Community Primary School

Following my visit with Hilary Macdonald, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 15 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 other members of the school 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:

- Phoenix Community Primary School reopened to pupils in Years 1 to 6 on 2 September 2020. Children in Reception had a phased start and began attending full time from 28 September 2020. Leaders expect pupils to attend full time and have communicated this expectation to parents.
- Pupils' attendance is been broadly in line with normal for this time of year.
- While pupils are studying their usual range of subjects, leaders are prioritising reading, writing and mathematics, alongside physical education (PE) and personal, social, health and emotional education (PSHE). The amount of time spent on some parts of the curriculum has been reduced.
- You have carried out phonics checks for pupils in Years 1 and 2 as well as checks of all pupils' new starting points in reading and writing. You have identified that pupils have fallen furthest behind in writing. Leaders plan to continue to raise the profile of reading, alongside a focus on spoken language and the teaching of vocabulary.
- Based on checks of pupils' new starting points in mathematics, you have adjusted your mathematics curriculum so that teachers focus on content that pupils have not been taught or have not remembered well. You are providing before-school catch-up sessions for Year 6 pupils who have fallen behind. You plan to extend this offer to pupils in other year groups after half term.

- Teachers are checking pupils' understanding across the wider curriculum. Leaders have made adjustments to the sequencing of PE and PSHE to take into account the impact of COVID-19 on pupils.
- Leaders have plans to deliver the curriculum remotely using a range of online and paper-based approaches, should this be needed as a result of COVID-19.

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

Alice Roberts
Her Majesty's Inspector