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James Adkins
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mr Adkins

Ofsted visit to Southill Lower School

Following my visit with Katherine Douglas, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 13 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 deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator. 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, a different 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 has been open to all pupils since term began on 7 September 2020. A small number of pupils are currently attending part time due to their individual needs.
- Attendance since the start of term is similar to what is usual for this time of year.
- Pupils are learning the full range of subjects in the school's usual curriculum. For the current time, you have chosen to use different arrangements to teach singing. You are also not teaching certain sports in physical education. You are exploring using virtual visits and events in place of the extra-curricular activities, trips and visiting speakers that the school usually provides.
- You have used reading, spelling and phonics tests to identify any areas where pupils have fallen behind. You are using the results of these checks to put in place extra help for those pupils who need it. You told us that pupils, including children in Reception and Nursery years, are being given lots of additional opportunities to practise and develop their reading skills.
- Since September, teachers are re-teaching important mathematical knowledge and making ongoing checks on pupils' learning. Teachers are focused on giving pupils more opportunities to practise and use their basic number skills. This includes using practical activities and apparatus to help pupils understand concepts like place value.

- You have made personal, social, health and citizenship education a priority. You feel this will help pupils settle back into working with others and support their emotional well-being. In the early years, you have placed a similar focus on children's personal, social and emotional development.
- You plan to use the school's current learning platforms to provide activities for pupils to complete across the full range of subjects, should you need to provide remote learning in the future.

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 Central Bedfordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Paul Wilson
Her Majesty's Inspector