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Nicola James
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Dear Mrs James

Ofsted visit to St Andrew's Primary School

Following my visit with Chris Smith, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 22 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 literacy leader. 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 5 and 6 on 3 September 2020. Pupils in other year groups entered gradually. All pupils were expected to attend full time from 14 September 2020.
- Pupils' attendance is lower than usual for this time of year. There is a small proportion of pupils who have not returned since September. You have kept in touch with all families to help pupils return as soon as possible.
- You told us that pupils are accessing the full range of subjects in the planned curriculum. Teachers have altered the sequencing of content in physical education and music so that some aspects of the curriculum will be taught later in the year. You expect all pupils to return to the school's usual curriculum by summer 2021.
- You have prioritised improving reading and phonics understanding across the school. Teachers have checked pupils' knowledge in phonics in Reception Year to Year 3, and you have noted that many pupils have forgotten their phonics knowledge. There are extra daily sessions and support for pupils and younger children to catch up.
- In mathematics, teachers are focusing on embedding place value understanding before moving on to teach mathematics content missed during the summer term. You told us that you are ensuring that pupils are secure in their knowledge before moving on to new content.
- You have focused on developing pupils' personal development and well-being. In some subjects, such as history and science, teachers have identified the knowledge and skills that pupils have missed during the

summer term. They are adjusting the curriculum to make sure that this will be covered in the future.

- You have plans in place to deliver the curriculum remotely for those pupils who are self-isolating. Where possible, this reflects what the rest of the class is studying in school. You are also planning a package of learning resources to cover the whole curriculum if needed for any future lockdown, including some online lessons delivered by your staff.

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

Yours sincerely

Gill Wild
Her Majesty's Inspector