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Rachel Davie
Executive Headteacher
Orchard Primary School
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Dear Ms Davie

Ofsted visit to Orchard Primary School

Following my visit with Gary Rawlings, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 6 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 acting 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 on 7 September 2020. All year groups are attending full time.
- Attendance has been slightly below the usual level at the beginning of the school year. A small number of families have not returned their children to the school. Leaders are working to get these pupils back in school through personal contact, targeted information and personal tours of the school to show the arrangements in place.
- Pupils are studying the school's usual curriculum. All subjects are being taught. Leaders have made some changes to the content of subjects, for example in music and physical education.
- Teachers in Years 1 and 2 have undertaken checks to see where pupils are in learning to read. They have found that pupils are unsure of some letter sounds. Staff are now teaching phonics twice a day to make sure pupils catch up.
- In other year groups, teachers have checked pupils' reading levels. They plan daily lessons to address any weaknesses.
- In mathematics, teachers have carried out similar checks on pupils' knowledge and understanding. They found that pupils in Years 3 to 6 have gaps in their knowledge of multiplication tables, which slow down their ability to carry out calculations. Extra teaching is taking place daily to address this.
- In the wider curriculum, teachers have identified the most important learning missed during the school closure. They have planned to teach it later this academic year.

- Leaders have plans to deliver a curriculum online which matches the school's usual curriculum in the case of a further school closure. This will include the use of an online platform for the school's own resources and online learning packages. The school will provide work packs for families without internet access.

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 and the director of children's services for Hackney. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Bryony Freeman
Her Majesty's Inspector