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Suzanne Bate
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Dear Miss Bate

Ofsted visit to Laycock Primary School

Following my visit with Lisa Strong, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 8 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 senior leadership team and the family liaison officer. 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 fully to all pupils on 7 September 2020. All pupils are expected to attend on a full-time basis.
- Since you opened the school to all pupils, attendance has been broadly in line with the school's normal attendance figures for this time of the year. Leaders communicate regularly with all families, particularly the families of pupils who have not yet returned, such as those having to quarantine after travelling abroad.
- Pupils are studying the usual range of subjects except Spanish, due to the arrangements in place to keep staff with specific groups of pupils. Leaders aim to return to the normal curriculum by January 2021.
- Teachers have used assessments to find out pupils' new starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. In other subjects, teachers are combining curriculum content which pupils missed in the spring and summer terms with what they would normally learn this term.
- In reading, teachers have noticed that older pupils' comprehension skills have regressed. In Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, teachers are providing higher levels of support for pupils who have fallen behind in phonics (letters and the sounds they represent).

- In Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, staff are providing extra opportunities to support deaf pupils' language skills. This is because they have noticed that these skills have been affected significantly over the past few months.
- Staff are providing additional classes to support pupils' learning, including in mathematics. These are smaller-sized groups of pupils, led by teaching staff and learning mentors, and aimed at helping pupils to settle in and catch up. In mathematics, staff are using daily sessions to reinforce pupils' key skills.
- In subjects such as history, geography and science, teachers have established the things pupils need to learn most this term to be able to move on with future learning. Leaders have introduced health sessions to address pupils' physical and emotional well-being.
- Remote learning is in place. If pupils need to learn at home, due to self-isolation, they can access the same learning as their peers who are physically in school. You are planning to further refine the remote learning offer, particularly for deaf pupils and children in the early years.

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

Yours sincerely

Gary Rawlings
Her Majesty's Inspector