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Dear Miss Murray

Ofsted visit to Sturry Church of England Primary School

Following my visit with Clive Dunn, 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, members of your senior leadership team and the chief executive officer and curriculum leaders from the Stour Academy Trust. 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 all pupils on 2 September 2020. As is usual in your school, children in the Reception Year had a phased start and attended full time from 15 September 2020.
- Following some absence due to non-COVID illness at the start of term, attendance has now improved to be in line with what you would normally expect as a school at this time of year. Your work with families where pupils were previously persistently absent has led to improved attendance for this group, post-lockdown.
- Pupils are being taught all of the subjects in the usual school curriculum. Content in some subjects has been rearranged to account for topics missed when the school was closed to most pupils. For example, in geography missed learning about the water cycle will be incorporated in a future topic about Antarctica.
- Assessments that have been carried out by teachers show that on the whole pupils in the current Year 1, 2 and 6 classes have fewer gaps in their learning than other year groups. The school was open to these pupils in June and July when they were taught in half-class 'bubbles'.

- Reading continues to be a priority for the school. You have checked pupils' early reading skills and reorganised the phonics groups. You plan to use government funding to employ additional adults to help those pupils who have fallen behind in reading.
- In mathematics, your teachers are revising previous learning to help pupils before they are taught something new in lessons.
- Leaders have worked with colleagues in the multi-academy trust to establish plans to provide remote learning should it be needed. This will include live online teaching each day for any class bubbles that are isolating.

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 board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Stour Academy Trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Canterbury, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Kent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lee Selby
Her Majesty's Inspector