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Phil Rawlings
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Rawlings

Ofsted visit to Netherbrook Primary School

Following my visit with Chris Stevens, 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 and your deputy headteacher. We also spoke to some other staff. 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 reopened to all year groups on the 2 September 2020. Pupils are expected to attend full time. The Reception class had a phased start.
- Overall attendance is slightly above what you would normally expect for this time of year. You told us that this is because you are working closely with some families to ensure regular attendance.
- Pupils are studying their usual subjects. Some aspects of music and physical education have been changed. For example, swimming lessons have not yet resumed. You plan to return these as soon as you can.
- Since returning to school, teachers have been making checks in lessons to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- You have noticed that some pupils have fallen behind with their phonics knowledge. You have introduced twice-daily phonics sessions for Year 2 pupils and also added some extra small-group teaching sessions.
- You told us teachers are providing pupils with additional opportunities to learn mathematics. These include teaching mathematics across a range of curriculum subjects. For example, teachers are using mathematical vocabulary in art lessons.
- You have provided home-learning packs to support pupils who may need to work at home. These packs complement this term's classroom work and are

ready to be used if needed. You told us that you are looking at ways to further help parents access and manage learning at home.

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 chief executive officer of the learning link multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Dudley. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Heather Phillips
Her Majesty's Inspector