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17 November 2020

Debbie Shepherd  
Headteacher  
Halfway Junior School  
Halfway Centre  
Halfway  
Sheffield  
South Yorkshire  
S20 4TA

Dear Mrs Shepherd

### **Ofsted remote visit to Halfway Junior School**

Following my remote visit with Matthew Vellensworth, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 5 November, 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. Following changes to government guidance and the imposition of COVID-19 (coronavirus) lockdown restrictions, we made this visit remotely to reduce pressure on the school.

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 executive headteacher. We also spoke to you in your capacity as designated safeguarding lead. We did not speak to pupils.

### **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 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 for all pupils on 2 September. All pupils are expected to attend full time.
- Attendance is currently higher than normal for this time of year.
- Pupils are studying their normal range of subjects. This term, some elements of the curriculum are not being taught as usual. First-hand experiences of visits and visitors in school are not currently taking place. You intend to return fully to the planned curriculum by the end of the summer term 2021.
- You told us that, with teachers, you have planned what you call a 'recovery curriculum'. This is woven into pupils' normal autumn term curriculum. It includes content that you consider pupils may have missed or not understood during the time when schools were only open to some pupils due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- We discussed the way teachers are assessing what pupils know and identifying any gaps in pupils' knowledge during lessons. You have increased teaching support for pupils, particularly those in Year 3 and Year 6, in reading, writing and mathematics.
- You explained that you currently have a senior leader who is responsible for the delivery of remote learning for any individual pupil who needs it. This senior leader uses both online and paper-based resources. The senior leader liaises with parents, pupils and the class teacher to check that the curriculum is the same as that taking place in the classroom. This senior leader also assesses pupils' learning.

- When group 'bubbles' of pupils need to be isolated, the class teachers manage remote learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Jo Sharpe  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**