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John Richardson
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Richardson

Ofsted visit to The South Hykeham Community Primary School

Following my visit with Vic Wilkinson, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 3 November 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 senior leader responsible for early years provision. 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 3 September 2020. All pupils are expected to attend full time.
- Current attendance is above the normal level of attendance for this time of year.
- All pupils are studying the full range of national curriculum subjects in Years 1 to 6. Children in the Reception Year are following their usual range of subjects.
- Leaders have reorganised their curriculum plans for the practical elements of some subjects, such as geography, and aspects of physical education. Pupils are not currently taught singing in music lessons. Leaders plan to restore this component of the subject as soon as possible.
- Leaders have prioritised aspects of the curriculum for pupils' personal development, including promoting their well-being and resilience. Leaders have allowed additional time for discussing pupils' experiences and feelings during their time away from school.
- Leaders are in the early stages of checking pupils' knowledge and skills in reading and writing. Teachers' initial checks on pupils' reading comprehension indicate that some pupils need to develop their understanding of author intent and inference, for example. Plans are in place to help pupils catch up with their learning in this subject after the initial assessments have been

completed. Teachers have also noticed that pupils' handwriting skills require additional practice.

- Leaders are similarly completing checks of pupils' knowledge and skills in mathematics. Teachers have noticed that pupils' speed of recall in their use of times tables and number bonds is not as secure as it used to be. They are focusing on practising these skills in class.
- In the Reception Year, leaders have prioritised their checks of children's early reading and counting skills. Teachers are helping children to catch up when they have fallen behind. Staff are also focusing on developing children's social skills.
- Teachers are currently developing a range of online resources to provide remote learning for pupils in Years 3 to 6, should this be necessary. Leaders told us that younger pupils will be able to access remote learning from the school's website.

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

Yours sincerely

Chris Stevens
Her Majesty's Inspector