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16 November 2020

Margaret Newcombe  
Acting headteacher  
Hillocks Primary and Nursery School  
Unwin Road  
Sutton-in-Ashfield  
Nottinghamshire  
NG17 4ND

Dear Mrs Newcombe

### **Ofsted remote visit to Hillocks Primary and Nursery School**

Following my remote visit with Jayne Ashman, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 5 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. Following changes to government guidance and the imposition of COVID-19 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 as the acting headteacher and leader responsible for safeguarding, the acting deputy headteacher and the family support worker. 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 (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 2 September 2020. Pupils are expected to attend full time.
- Attendance is above the school's normal figures for this time of year.
- All pupils are studying their usual range of subjects. In physical education and music, swimming and singing are taught in a reduced form. Leaders have suspended educational visits and after-school clubs and are not receiving visitors to the school.
- Leaders plan to resume the school's usual curriculum before summer 2021.
- Staff have assessed pupils' new starting points in English and mathematics. As a result of these checks, pupils are receiving extra support to cover what was missed during the period when the school was not fully open.
- In Years 1 to 3, leaders and staff are providing extra sessions in phonics. Teachers have adjusted the phonics groups and teaching methods to align with class 'bubbles'.
- In Years 4 to 6, leaders and staff have made reading a high priority. Pupils receive individual or small group support linked to their specific needs.

- In mathematics, staff are focusing on revising number facts in Years 1 and 2 and multiplication tables in Years 3 to 6.
- Leaders have designed a set of plans for each subject across the wider curriculum. Teachers are using these plans to check what was missed in the summer term. They are building this missed content into the current topics.
- In the Nursery and Reception classes, staff have adapted the curriculum in the light of children's new starting points.
- Leaders and staff are developing a range of resources for delivering the curriculum remotely in case this is required for any pupils or classes that may need to isolate in future.

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

Yours sincerely

Christine Watkins  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**