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Steve Beynon
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Dear Mr Beynon

Ofsted remote visit to Minerva Primary School

Following my remote visit with Heather Barraclough, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 12 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 (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, the deputy chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust (MAT), the MAT's director of teaching and learning, the MAT's inclusion lead and the school's safeguarding officer. 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:

- A small number of pupils have had to work from home as they were self-isolating.
- All pupils are studying their usual range of subjects.
- Leaders have checked pupils' new starting points in English and mathematics. You are adapting the curriculum to accommodate any gaps in pupils' knowledge. For example, you have noticed that pupils are not speaking as clearly as they were before.
- Reading is a priority. You are providing pupils with a range of non-fiction books as well as fiction. You have re-introduced phonics throughout the school. In writing, pupils are re-visiting basic punctuation.
- In mathematics, Year 2 pupils are focusing on number work. Older pupils, in Years 3 and 4, are revising addition and subtraction, while pupils in Years 5 and 6 work on their times tables.
- In music, you have created a curriculum that provides pupils in Years 5 and 6 with knowledge about different musical styles. In Years 1 and 2, you use singing to help pupils identify syllables.
- You have maintained the usual curriculum in Nursery and Reception. Children can move from indoor to outdoor learning.
- Remote learning is a multimedia-based approach. Pupils view recorded lessons from professional websites, as well as completing paper-based worksheets. When pupils work from home, they speak with their teachers online at the start and end of the day about their learning. The lack of technical devices is a barrier to online 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 board of trustees and the chief executive officer of The Redstart Learning Partnership MAT, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Somerset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kathy Maddocks
Her Majesty's Inspector