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20 November 2020

Diane Jeffries
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Jeffries

Ofsted remote visit to St Mary's CofE Primary School, Deane

Following my remote visit with Mark Quinn, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 11 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 and the two deputy headteachers. 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:

- On the day of the visit, two class 'bubbles', involving pupils in Years 1 and 3, were self-isolating. Just over half of the pupils in the school have spent some time working from home since the start of term.
- Pupils are studying their usual range of subjects from the primary national curriculum. You have made some changes to physical education because the local swimming pool has closed temporarily. You plan for pupils to return to your usual curriculum content by the summer term 2021.
- Teachers have checked pupils' knowledge in English and mathematics to identify what they may have missed or forgotten since March 2020. You explained how you are using this information to adjust curriculum plans and to support pupils who need extra help to catch up.
- In reading, pupils' vocabulary is not as developed as you would expect at this stage in the year. This is limiting the vocabulary choices pupils make when they write. Teachers are helping pupils to develop their vocabulary across all subjects.
- In mathematics, pupils are not as confident with times tables as they were in March 2020. This is affecting their ability to multiply and divide numbers. You are giving pupils more opportunities to practise and apply their knowledge of times tables.

- You have identified that pupils have missed some important learning in subjects other than English and mathematics. Teachers are adjusting their plans to include this learning. For instance, in science, pupils in Year 6 will learn about fossils when they are being taught about evolution.
- You described how you are delivering remote education to pupils who are self-isolating. Most pupils access this learning online. You explained that where a bubble is working from home, teachers provide daily lessons in English, mathematics and one other subject. If an individual is self-isolating, lessons match what the other pupils are learning in class.

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 director of education for the diocese of Manchester, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bolton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jackie Stillings
Her Majesty's Inspector