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Louise Kilminster
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Kilminster

Ofsted remote visit to New Close Primary School

Following my remote visit with Julie Carrington, 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 (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 senior leadership team and the executive headteacher. 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:

- You reopened the school to pupils in Years 1 to 6 on 3 September 2020. Children joining Reception started full time on 21 September 2020.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly in line with the school's normal attendance for this time of year.
- Children in the Reception class are following their usual curriculum. Teachers are prioritising learning, to further children's speech, language and physical development.
- In Years 1 to 6, you have adjusted the depth of content in some subjects. This is to allow more time for teaching reading, writing and mathematics, and focussing on pupils' physical health and well-being. You aim to return to your full curriculum offer by April 2021.
- In September, staff carried out checks on pupils' new starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers are using the results to match teaching to pupils' specific needs.
- You are prioritising the teaching of reading. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have an extra phonics lesson each day. In Years 3 to 6, teachers have identified that

many pupils have gaps in their knowledge of vocabulary, grammar and punctuation.

- In mathematics, teachers have noticed gaps in pupils' abilities in counting, quick recall of number bonds and times tables facts. Pupils have an extra lesson each day to practise basic number skills.
- You have systems in place for pupils who need to work remotely. These include online resources and activities which are accessible through the school's website. You have plans to introduce some live lessons if needed.

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, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Wiltshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Dale Burr
Her Majesty's Inspector