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19 November 2020

Sally Taylor
Acting Principal
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Dear Mrs Taylor

Ofsted remote visit to Castle Batch Primary School

Following my remote visit with Jen Southall, 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 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, other senior leaders and the head of primary education for the trust. 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:

- At the time of the visit, the Reception Year and Year 5 'bubbles' were not in school. This means that approximately a quarter of the school were working from home.
- All pupils are studying every subject. However, you have had to modify aspects of physical education and music. You expect all pupils to return to their usual curriculum by the summer term 2021.
- Teachers have checked what pupils know and can remember in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers have identified gaps in pupils' knowledge that need to be filled in order to help pupils catch up.
- Reading is a priority. You are focusing on improving the range of words that pupils know, so that they can understand more when they read. Leaders have put particular focus on phonics teaching for Years 1 and 2, to help them to catch up.
- In mathematics, teachers have identified gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding of number. You are focusing on this, so that pupils can become more confident to reason and solve mathematical problems.

- Since the return of all pupils in September 2020, you have prioritised pupils' personal, social, health and economic education, and increased pupils' daily physical activity.
- You use a combination of paper-based and online activities for remote education. You have made sure that every pupil has the equipment they need to complete digital work at home. When bubbles go home, teachers plan work that is matched to the pupils' usual curriculum.

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 Priory Learning Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for north Somerset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Stewart Gale
Her Majesty's Inspector