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23 November 2020

Emma Gill  
Headteacher  
Ferham Primary School  
Ferham Road  
Rotherham  
South Yorkshire  
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Dear Mrs Gill

### **Ofsted remote visit to Ferham Primary School**

Following my remote visit with Patricia Head, 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 and the executive lead. 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:**

- The school opened fully to all pupils on 4 September 2020. All pupils are expected to attend full time.
- Attendance is slightly higher than it was at the same time last year.
- Pupils are studying the range of subjects that make up the school's usual curriculum.
- Leaders have directed teachers to check pupils' new starting points in reading. You explained that teachers have identified that many pupils have gaps in their knowledge of phonics in Years 1 to 6 and some pupils are less fluent readers than they were in March 2020. You said that you are spending more time teaching phonics and providing more opportunities for pupils to read in all subjects in the curriculum.
- In mathematics, teachers have assessed pupils' new starting points. Leaders have adjusted the curriculum content to address gaps in pupils' learning. You told us that you have prioritised teaching place value.
- In the wider curriculum, teachers are prioritising personal, social, and health education. You explained that teachers have made some changes to curriculum plans in other subjects so that any missed content is covered this year alongside the school's typical curriculum. You hope to return to the school's usual curriculum before the summer term of 2021.
- A small number of pupils are currently accessing remote education because they are self-isolating at home. You told us that you have plans in place to

deliver parts of the curriculum remotely, including English and mathematics, to all pupils should it be 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 governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Rotherham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jean Watt  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**