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23 November 2020

Emily Birch  
Headteacher  
Galley Hill Primary School and Nursery  
Galley Hill  
Hemel Hempstead  
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Dear Mrs Birch

### **Ofsted visit to Galley Hill Primary School and Nursery**

Following my visit with Marc White, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 3 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.

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 deputy headteacher. We did not speak to pupils because of the protective measures in place.

### **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:**

- The school was fully open for Year 1 to Year 6 pupils on 4 September 2020. Children in Nursery and Reception had their usual staggered start. They attended full time from 10 September.
- Attendance is better than is typical for this time of year. Pupils have told staff they are happy to be back at school with their teachers and friends. Fewer families are taking unauthorised term-time holidays.
- Pupils are being taught all the subjects that they normally would. Some content has been reordered. Pupils will learn some aspects of indoor physical education (PE) later in the school year. Pupils are not currently swimming, and in music pupils are not learning to play the violin. Leaders plan for the content in all subjects to return to normal by the summer term 2021.
- Teachers have assessed pupils' new starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. Some pupils have taken a step back in their phonic knowledge. Pupils are not always reading as well as they previously did. In response, leaders have added extra small-group teaching sessions to help pupils catch up. Teachers are also doing more reading activities in class.
- In mathematics, teachers are revisiting place value and multiplication tables to make up for the learning pupils have missed.
- In early years, teachers are spending more time on the development of children's social skills, speaking and listening. In Year 1 to Year 6, teachers are checking what pupils have remembered in the full range of subjects. This has already started in some areas, for example in PE, and leaders plan to continue with this work.

- Leaders have introduced a whole-school approach to remote education should it be required. Teachers will set work online, which pupils can complete using a range of electronic devices. Pupils without internet access have opportunities to learn the same things through paper-based activity packs.

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 Hertfordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Fiona Webb  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**