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Helen Gladstone
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Dear Mrs Gladstone

Ofsted visit to Front Street Community Primary School

Following my visit with Jenny Thomas, 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, the senior leadership team and a family support worker. 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 opened to all pupils on 8 September 2020. All pupils are expected to attend full time.
- Attendance figures are slightly below the normal attendance for this time of year. You are encouraging parents and carers not to take holidays during term time.
- Leaders have amended the usual school curriculum so that pupils have more time to rediscover and improve their reading and mathematics fluency, physical and mental well-being, and artistic skills. Teachers are prioritising the statutory content of the national curriculum in other subjects, such as history and science. Leaders anticipate that pupils will return to their usual curriculum at the start of the next academic year.
- Teachers completed an audit of pupils' learning to identify subject content that would need to be introduced or revisited. You explained that teachers have been assessing pupils' strengths and weaknesses in learning during class activities. Pupils will sit formal assessments in the coming weeks.
- In English, teacher assessment has identified that pupils use of vocabulary and ability to sustain focus while reading is not as strong as it used to be. Currently, English lessons centre on improving pupils' reading and writing skills and building their reading and writing stamina. Pupils are provided with a collection of texts to help improve their literacy skills.
- Your checks show that, in mathematics, pupils require additional time and support to improve further their multiplication skills and their understanding of number bonds and place value. You explained that pupils' mathematical

fluency has been supported via daily 'bursts' of mathematics, with a particular focus on multiplication tables.

- Leaders are introducing 'virtual visits' as extra-curricular activities, and planned residential opportunities are currently suspended. For example, pupils recently met remotely with representatives from the World Wide Fund for Nature.
- Staff have created resources for pupils to use via the school website should they need to self-isolate. Pupils who are absent from school and without access to digital technology are provided with paper copies of learning resources and activities to help them keep up with their learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Lee Elliott
Her Majesty's Inspector