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Anne-Marie Middleton
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Middleton

Ofsted remote visit to Pilgrims' Way Primary School

Following my remote visit with Lee Selby, 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 deputy headteacher and the chief executive officer of your multi-academy 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 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:

- Pilgrims' Way Primary School opened to pupils in Years 1 to 6 from 2 September 2020. Children in Reception had a phased start and were attending full time from 22 September 2020.
- Attendance for pupils is broadly in line with normal attendance for this time of year. Rates of persistent absence are lower than they typically are at this point in the school year.
- Pupils are studying all subjects normally offered at Pilgrims' Way Primary School. However, teachers are prioritising reading and mathematics, alongside a focus on personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, internet safety and forest school.
- Phonics checks have identified new starting points for younger pupils. Staff have also identified pupils who have fallen behind in reading. Additional support is being provided to help pupils catch up. Assessments in early years have identified that children in Nursery and Reception will need additional support to develop their language skills.
- In mathematics, teachers have used questioning and checks of pupils' work to understand the gaps in pupils' learning. Support staff have been reallocated to

year groups where pupils need the most support to catch up. Formal assessments are planned for later this term.

- Across the wider curriculum, teachers have checked pupils' new starting points in each subject. Leaders told us that staff were prioritising certain content to help pupils to catch up by the end of the year. Sometimes, topics have been reordered. For example, pupils in Year 6 will now study the Second World War later in the year than originally planned.
- Leaders have plans to deliver the curriculum remotely, should this be needed. Teachers will use resources that are familiar to parents and pupils, and which can be accessed from a range of devices, including mobile phones.

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

Yours sincerely

Alice Roberts
Her Majesty's Inspector