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Darryl Asbury
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mr Asbury

Ofsted remote visit to Western Springs Primary School

Following my remote visit with Charalambos Loizou, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 10 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 head of school and the chief executive officer 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 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:

- Since the school reopened to all pupils in September 2020, very few pupils have had to self-isolate and work at home.
- Pupils are studying their usual range of subjects. A new bespoke curriculum is being introduced. You plan to roll this out over the year so that it is fully in place by the start of the summer term 2021.
- A range of tests and assessments have been used to check what pupils can do in reading, writing, spelling and mathematics. Teachers identify the gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. They adjust their weekly plans and build in time to teach what was missed in the summer term 2020.
- Supporting pupils to read fluently and accurately is a key priority for you. You told us that many pupils do not know their sounds as well as they should. Extra phonics sessions have been introduced in Years 1 to 4.
- In mathematics, teachers have noted that many pupils are struggling with their times tables. Pupils practise their skills in a timed challenge known as the 'multiplication club'.
- Staff in early years say that children are unable to concentrate for sustained periods of time. Adults work with pairs or small groups to help children focus on their learning.
- If pupils have to self-isolate, staff deliver a paper-based work pack. This includes English, mathematics and topic work. Younger pupils' work is based

on a familiar book. You explained that the school does not currently have the technology to deliver live online lessons. Staff and pupils are being trained in online learning, ready for when it is available to use.

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 Perry Hall multi-academy trust, the regional school's commissioner and the director of children's services for Staffordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Nicola Harwood
Her Majesty's Inspector