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Nicholas Plumb
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Plumb

Ofsted remote visit to Southmead School

Following my remote visit with Lydia Pride, 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 and the senior leadership team. 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:

- A small number of pupils have had to work from home this term as they were self-isolating.
- Pupils are studying the full range of subjects. You have made some changes to the order in which you teach physical education. For example, you plan to teach team sports later in the year.
- You have assessed pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. You have identified gaps in learning since pupils returned to school, and you have adapted the curriculum accordingly. You have put in place additional staffing, including a reading recovery specialist to work with individual pupils and small groups to help them to catch up.
- In reading, you have assessed pupils' new starting points and can see that some pupils have gaps in their phonic knowledge. You have adapted the curriculum in Year 2 so pupils can revisit sounds they were taught last year. In Year 6, you have identified gaps in how pupils use inference and are giving them more opportunities to practise this.
- Your assessment of writing indicates that stamina, sentence construction and use of vocabulary are not as well developed as they might typically be. You have adapted the curriculum to address these gaps in learning.
- In mathematics, you have assessed that some key aspects, including arithmetic, subtraction and problem-solving, need to be revisited. You have

adjusted the curriculum to enable pupils to review these topics. You have put support in place for pupils who need additional help.

- You have identified content that pupils have missed in science and have organised the curriculum to cover this content in the future. For example, you have added the study of plants into the Year 2 curriculum. You have adapted the Year 6 curriculum so that forces and space will be taught later in the year.
- You have delivered remote education that is in line with the usual curriculum. This has been digital and paper-based. If pupils are working from home, they complete a range of activities that mirror as far as possible what they would have done in school. You have arranged for staff to provide remote support to pupils who need additional help.

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

Yours sincerely

Tracey Reynolds
Her Majesty's Inspector