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Kayleigh Ferguson
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Ferguson

Ofsted remote visit to St Mark's CofE Primary School

Following my remote visit with Mark Quinn, 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, one of the assistant headteachers and the pastoral manager. 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:

- The school opened to all pupils on 3 September 2020. All pupils are expected to attend full time.
- Since the start of the school year 2020, pupils' attendance has been similar to the same period last year.
- Pupils are studying their usual range of subjects. You have developed plans to cover those aspects of the curriculum that staff did not teach after March 2020. These plans identify how teachers will cover what was missed during the summer term 2020.
- Teachers' checks of pupils' reading have shown that many younger pupils have developed gaps in their knowledge of phonics. Teachers have also identified that older pupils are not as fluent as they should be when reading aloud. As a result, you are ensuring that pupils are given more opportunities to read in subjects across the curriculum.
- Teachers have assessed pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding to see if pupils have lost ground since March 2020. They have found that many pupils are not as competent as they were in using numbers. Teachers are

providing extra opportunities for pupils to work with number and practise calculations.

- Teachers are also checking pupils' knowledge in other subjects, such as science and history. They are using this information to adapt the content of these subjects to take account of learning that pupils have missed due to the COVID-19 restrictions.
- You have developed a range of learning resources for pupils who are not able to attend school. The materials are available online. You have also developed paper-based resources for those who do not have access to a computer. You told us that, where possible, these resources provide pupils with the opportunity to follow most of the school's curriculum while working at home.

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 and the chief executive officer of the Wings multi-academy trust, the director of education for the diocese of Liverpool, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Wigan. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Paul Tomkow
Her Majesty's Inspector