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Louise Shuttleworth
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Shuttleworth

Ofsted remote visit to Featherstone Wood Primary School

Following my remote visit with David Milligan, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 12 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 your deputy headteacher and your leaders responsible for literacy and for early years. 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:

- All pupils have returned to school. Attendance is higher than it was at this time last year.
- Pupils are studying the usual range of subjects. Changes have been made in some subjects so that pupils can learn safely. Physical education lessons are mostly taught outside. Swimming lessons and school visits have been paused this term. Leaders feel there are no barriers preventing all pupils following the full curriculum by the summer term 2021.
- Checks carried out by teachers of what pupils know and can do since their return to school have identified reading as a top priority. Phonics is now taught more often to pupils in all key stages. New books have been introduced to each class to encourage pupils to read more widely and often.
- Improving pupils' mathematical knowledge is also a priority. A catch-up programme is under way to help pupils in all classes fill gaps in their learning.
- In Reception class, leaders have identified that some children have missed regular opportunities to learn and play alongside others. Staff are allocating additional time each day for them to play together inside and outdoors. Staff and children eat together and use this as another opportunity to help develop children's speech and language.
- No classes or 'bubbles' of pupils have been sent home. A very small proportion of individual pupils have had to work at home for short periods of time. Staff have sent home packs of learning matched to what is taught in

school to help these pupils maintain their learning. Further training is planned to develop online learning if it is needed in the future.

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

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson
Her Majesty's Inspector