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24 November 2020

Kathryn Forsyth  
Acting Headteacher  
Brookhouse Primary School  
Troy Street  
Blackburn  
Lancashire  
BB1 6NY

Dear Mrs Forsyth

### **Ofsted remote visit to Brookhouse Primary School**

Following my remote visit with Claire Cropper, 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 acting deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher. 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:**

- You explained that about half of your pupils have had to work at home since the start of this term. Pupils in the Year 1 and Year 2 class 'bubbles' were self-isolating at the time of the visit.
- All pupils are studying the full range of curriculum subjects. Staff have changed the way that they teach each subject to help pupils catch up on any learning they have missed due to the COVID-19 restrictions. You expect to be teaching the usual curriculum content by summer 2021.
- You told us that teachers have checked for gaps in pupils' knowledge of reading which may have developed since March 2020. Based on these checks, teachers are providing additional support to help children in the early years and pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 to catch up with their knowledge of phonics. In Years 3 to 6, teachers are redeveloping pupils' comprehension skills and helping pupils to regain forgotten vocabulary.
- Teachers have also assessed pupils' mathematical knowledge. Teachers have found that, across all year groups, many pupils are not as confident in using numbers as they were before March 2020. Teachers are providing extra

support to help pupils complete calculations, such as adding and subtracting numbers quickly.

- In other subjects, such as science and music, you told us that teachers check what pupils have missed since March 2020. Teachers identify the knowledge that pupils need to help them with their current learning. Staff then teach this in addition to their planned lessons.
- You provide remote education online, or by using paper-based resources if pupils do not have access to a computer. Using your online system, teachers give 'live' lessons every morning in English and mathematics. Any pupils who are self-isolating can join these lessons.

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 Blackburn and Darwen. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mark Quinn  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**