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Sara Haynes
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Haynes

Ofsted visit to Arnhem Wharf Primary School

Following my visit with Bryony Freeman, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 3 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.

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 the senior leadership team including the leader with responsibility for safeguarding. We did not speak to pupils because of the protective measures in place.

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 (coronavirus) 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 opened the school to all pupils on 7 September 2020. Children joining the Nursery started gradually over the first four weeks. They are now attending school full time.
- Pupils' attendance overall this term has been lower than the usual attendance for this time of year. Leaders have worked with families to support their children's return to school.
- Pupils in all year groups are covering the usual range of subjects offered at the school. In Year 1, pupils are following an extended period of transition from the early years foundation stage, to help them catch up on missed learning. Singing is limited to small groups of pupils at a time. Educational visits in many subjects, especially in history, have been postponed. You are planning to return to the usual curriculum by the spring term 2021.
- Since the start of term, teachers have completed checks for gaps in pupils' reading skills. You found that many younger pupils are not confident in using phonics. Additional sessions of phonics have been introduced for pupils up to Year 3, to help them get back on track as soon as possible.
- Teachers have undertaken similar checks on pupils' knowledge in mathematics. Teachers are devoting more time to helping pupils tackle number values, problem solving and reasoning.
- Teachers have started to identify the important knowledge and specific vocabulary that pupils have missed out on learning, or do not recall from their previous learning. Leaders have adapted their plans, to cover these key facts before moving onto new content in a range of subjects.

- You have organised training for teachers in the use of the school's remote learning platform. Pupils are practising using this now they are back at school. Pupils can access the school's curriculum online if they have to isolate 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, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Tower Hamlets. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Phil Garnham
Her Majesty's Inspector