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Paul West
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Dear Mr West

Ofsted remote visit to Kirkburton Church of England Voluntary Aided First School

Following my remote visit with Alison Aitchison, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 17 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:

- At the time of the visit, a Year 4 'bubble' was sent home to self-isolate. Approximately a third of pupils have had to learn remotely from home, at some point, since the start of term.
- Pupils are studying their usual range of subjects. Leaders have dedicated more time to teaching English and mathematics so that pupils can learn the curriculum content they missed in the summer term. Leaders plan to return to their usual curriculum in all subjects by the summer term 2021.
- In English, you have prioritised phonics and reading because pupils have missed teaching during the summer term. Extra catch-up phonics sessions are taking place to help pupils learn to read with accuracy and fluency. Your checks in writing show that some pupils in Years 3 to 5 need to re-visit lessons to develop sentence structure.
- Teachers have made similar checks on pupils' new starting points in mathematics. They have identified gaps in pupils' ability to solve mathematical problems. Teachers have adjusted curriculum plans so that pupils have more opportunities to practise their problem-solving skills.

- For other subjects, such as science and history, curriculum content has been adapted. Leaders plan to go back to the original curriculum once missed learning has been covered.
- Remote education broadly matches what pupils are taught in school. Class bubbles and individuals who are isolating can take part in daily live lessons.
- You make sure that remote learning activities are suitable for different age groups, including Reception children. Phonics activities are provided online for pupils to access at any time of the day. Teachers provide feedback to all pupils on the work they complete.

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 director of education for the diocese of Leeds, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Kirklees. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jenny Thomas
Her Majesty's Inspector