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30 November 2020

Lisle von Buchenroder  
Headteacher  
Star Primary School  
Star Lane  
London  
E16 4NH

Dear Ms von Buchenroder

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

Following my remote visit with Mark Smith, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 4 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:**

- The school reopened to pupils in Years 2, 4 and 6 on 2 September 2020. Pupils in Years 1, 3 and 5 started on 3 September 2020. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 all returned to school on 4 September 2020. Children in Reception returned on 7 September 2020, with a staggered start.
- Pupils' attendance is lower than this period in 2019. Leaders are working with families to calm any anxieties and to help them to recognise the symptoms of COVID-19 or seasonal colds.
- You aim to return to your normal curriculum by the summer term 2021. Currently, pupils are not taught Spanish. This time has been allocated to the additional teaching of key skills in English and mathematics.
- Teachers have assessed pupils' starting points. You have found that many pupils cannot sustain reading for periods of time. You have prioritised the purchase of new books to support pupils' reading and developing oracy. In younger classes, leaders have focused on phonics. Staff have provided parents with videos to model the letter sounds.
- In mathematics, leaders have identified weaknesses in pupils' fluency. You have identified that multiplication and place value are a key priority. Teachers are using the additional sessions to teach these key skills.
- In the wider curriculum, you are prioritising the teaching of computing and computer skills. Pupils are using computers to record and research their work.

Your aim is that pupils become more confident using technology should there be a need for them to learn away from school.

- Teachers upload presentations and record lessons so that pupils who are isolating can access the same learning as their peers. You have utilised video software for teachers to present live lessons to classes when pupils and teachers have needed to self-isolate.

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

Yours sincerely

Adam Vincent  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**