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Joanne Marie Smith
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Smith

Ofsted visit to Breckon Hill Primary School

Following my visit with Alison Aitchison, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 22 October 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 you and the senior leadership team. 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:

- The school opened fully to all pupils on 2 September 2020. All pupils were expected to be in school at this time.
- Attendance is below the normal attendance level for your school at this time of year. Leaders have employed their own education welfare officer and are working with the local authority to encourage better attendance. At the time of the visit, a Year 5 'bubble' was self-isolating.
- Pupils study the full range of subjects in the planned curriculum. Leaders told us that assessments have identified gaps in pupils' English and mathematical knowledge where previous content has been taught.
- You have dedicated more time to English and mathematics lessons to help pupils catch up. You have reduced time spent teaching subjects such as modern foreign languages and computing to accommodate this. You say that you expect pupils to return to the full curriculum in the summer term 2021, once missed learning in English and mathematics has been taught.
- In English, leaders have identified reading as a priority since September 2020. You explain that daily reading takes place in all year groups. Pupils take reading books home each week to practise and help them catch up.
- Leaders are focusing on revisiting specific vocabulary across the range of subjects.
- As a result of COVID-19, leaders are developing an online learning system to deliver the curriculum remotely should this be needed.

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

Yours sincerely

Jennifer Thomas
Her Majesty's Inspector