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4 December 2020

Emma Beardah  
Headteacher  
Walter Halls Primary and Early Years School  
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Nottinghamshire  
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Dear Mrs Beardah

### **Ofsted remote visit to Walter Halls Primary and Early Years School**

Following my remote visit with Vic Wilkinson, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 24 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 deputy 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:**

- At the time of the visit, all children in the Reception Year were self-isolating. Typically, a small number of pupils have to learn from home each week.
- Pupils are studying the school's usual range of subjects. Leaders have reduced what is being taught in some subjects so that more time can be dedicated to English and mathematics. Teachers are currently delivering content from the wider curriculum during themed weeks, such as 'The seven wonders of the man-made world'.
- In reading, teachers' checks show that some older pupils have lost the stamina needed to read fluently. Others have forgotten the phonic knowledge that they need to read unfamiliar words. Leaders are making sure that these pupils get extra help and time to practise reading.
- Some younger pupils' spoken language did not improve during the period when the school was not fully open. Staff are giving regular support to these pupils to help improve their communication skills and vocabulary.
- Teachers have checked what pupils can remember in writing. Some pupils have forgotten how to write sentences with accurate grammar and punctuation. Teachers are providing support during and after the school day to help these pupils catch up.
- Teachers have assessed all pupils in mathematics. Leaders have no significant concerns about gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding.

Teachers are using daily routines to cover missed content, such as practising times tables when pupils are lining up.

- Leaders have plans in place to check pupils' new starting points across the wider curriculum as the year progresses. They are currently prioritising pupils' health and well-being.
- Pupils who are not in school access learning from home. Teachers provide video lessons and paper-based resources so that pupils can access the same learning as those who remain in school. Staff contact families regularly to check how well pupils are doing.

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 Nottingham City Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Steve Varnam  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**