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Ellen Butcher
Headteacher
Whitstable and Seasalter Endowed Church of England Junior School
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Dear Ms Butcher

Ofsted remote visit to Whitstable and Seasalter Endowed Church of England Junior School

Following my remote visit with Alice Roberts, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 10 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 other members of your 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:

- Since returning in September 2020, pupils have been able to attend school full time within their own class 'bubbles'. So far, no bubbles have had to isolate as a whole, but some individual pupils have been required to self-isolate at home while waiting for test results, or after returning from family holidays abroad.
- Pupils are studying their normal range of curriculum subjects, although some subject content has been amended or reduced due to the impact of COVID-19 and your focus on addressing pupils' learning loss in reading. Amendments have been made in subjects such as music and with much of your extra-curricular offer, for instance. You plan to return to your full curriculum by the summer term of 2021 or before, if possible.
- Staff are constantly assessing learning to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. This is true across all subjects, but is more formally established in mathematics and English, where additional support is provided within class bubbles to those pupils who need it.
- Teachers have formally assessed pupils' reading ability since returning. Teachers and support staff are providing extra support to improve reading fluency and the phonics skills of younger pupils where needed.
- In mathematics, teachers have checked pupils' new starting points and are planning learning based on this. Teachers are continuing to monitor the gaps in pupils' knowledge as the term progresses and are providing additional support within class bubbles where needed.

- You are continuing to enhance the school's remote education offer in partnership with parents, pupils and staff. Your plans include introducing more online learning. You recognise that there are barriers around access to technology at home for some pupils. Because of this, you are also providing a range of other resources to support pupils' learning at home, 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 director of education for the diocese of Canterbury, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Kent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Clive Close
Her Majesty's Inspector