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Julie Puxley
Executive headteacher
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Dear Mrs Puxley

Ofsted remote visit to Katherine Semar Junior School

Following my remote visit with Cindy Impey, 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, the senior leadership team and another senior leader who has responsibility for safeguarding along with you. 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:

- You have been pleased that pupils have returned to school ready to learn. They have settled into the new routines put in place. Since the start of the academic year, hardly any pupils have had to work from home.
- Pupils are studying the full range of subjects. There have been some changes made to the order of teaching content in a few subjects, such as physical education. Leaders intend for pupils to learn the expected content in all subjects by summer 2021.
- Teachers have checked what pupils know and can remember in mathematics, reading and writing. Where pupils need to catch up, they have been given additional instruction and support. Teachers plan to check pupils' knowledge in other subjects, such as history, at the end of the autumn term as usual.
- In mathematics you found that pupils were not sure of some of the content that has been previously taught. Pupils had some difficulty remembering their times tables facts. You are pleased with how quickly pupils are regaining their knowledge of these important facts.

- You have prioritised the teaching of reading. You have checked which pupils need extra help to be fluent readers. Teachers are providing additional guidance to pupils who may have fallen behind with their reading fluency and understanding.
- Pupils have returned to school needing some reminders about punctuation, spelling and grammar when they are writing. In Year 3, pupils are having more time with handwriting to secure the knowledge and skills they need.
- If an individual or a 'bubble' is sent home to work, leaders have plans to educate pupils from the first day. Pupils are provided with a range of online learning activities. Leaders continue to develop their remote online provision so that teachers can provide feedback to pupils if 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 chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Saffron multi-academy trust, and to the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Essex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kim Hall
Her Majesty's Inspector