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9 December 2020

Joanne Clensy  
Headteacher  
The Cherry Trees School  
68 Campbell Road  
Bow  
London  
E3 4EA

Dear Ms Clensy

### **Ofsted remote visit to The Cherry Trees School**

Following my remote visit with Bryony Freeman, 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, the associate headteacher and the inclusion officer, who is also the safeguarding lead. 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 this visit, no pupils were isolating at home. About one third of pupils have needed to self-isolate since the school reopened. However, there have been no confirmed cases of COVID-19, and these pupils have now returned.
- Pupils are not studying French or some aspects of the usual physical education (PE) curriculum, including dance and swimming. Leaders plan to reintroduce the usual PE curriculum by the summer term 2021. They do not intend to reintroduce French until September 2021.
- Teachers checked every pupil's reading skills when they returned to school and found they had widely varying new starting points. All pupils now read to a member of staff every day. Pupils who need to catch up are receiving individual support from a teacher who knows what they need to learn.
- In mathematics, teachers have learned that pupils need to catch up with their knowledge and understanding of how numbers work. They are including extra lessons on this aspect to help pupils remember what they have forgotten.
- Leaders realised that pupils had limited opportunity to investigate scientific ideas practically before they returned to school. Therefore, teachers are focusing on practical work in this term's science lessons. Leaders are also using tutors from a local music project to help pupils catch up with aspects of percussion skills they missed when the school was not fully open.

- All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders are prioritising lessons intended to promote their emotional and mental well-being. For example, pupils are spending more time outdoors taking part in activities on the school site.
- All pupils have been provided with a tablet computer to take part in lessons remotely, and leaders have encouraged parents to join these lessons with their children. However, families with weaker internet connections have not been able to take part fully. Leaders intend to provide a wider range of practical equipment for pupils who may need to use remote education in the future.

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 Tower Hamlets. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Wright  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**