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Catherine O'Neill Edwards
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Dear Mrs O'Neill Edwards

Ofsted remote visit to Mendell Primary School

Following my remote visit with Simon Hunter, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 19 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:

- Since the start of term, around half of the pupils in the school have spent some time working from home. Pupils in the Year 1 'bubble' are currently self-isolating.
- Teachers have started to make checks on what pupils can remember of the learning that they have undertaken since March 2020. This is to establish pupils' new starting points. Teachers are amending curriculum plans, for example in mathematics and geography, to incorporate key subject content that was not taught in the late spring and summer terms 2020.
- With the exception of some aspects of physical education (PE), pupils are studying all subjects in the wider curriculum. Teachers have made changes to the way PE is taught. Plans are in place to return pupils to the usual curriculum by the end of the summer term 2021.
- Teachers' checks show that children in early years and pupils in Year 1 have forgotten some of the letters and sounds that they had learned prior to March 2020. You are providing additional support to help these pupils to catch up. In Years 2 to 6, teachers are focusing on developing pupils' reading fluency to support their reading comprehension.
- Pupils across school have gaps in their mathematical learning. You are adapting curriculum plans to help pupils catch up on this missed learning. Teachers are spending time each day revising basic number facts to improve pupils' confidence, precision and fluency.

- The majority of remote education is provided online. Teachers provide work for class bubbles and individual pupils who are self-isolating. This work broadly reflects what is being taught in school. You explained that the teaching staff have improved their expertise and confidence in delivering learning remotely.

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

Yours sincerely

Pippa Jackson Maitland
Her Majesty's Inspector