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Sarah Rowlands
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Rowlands

Ofsted remote visit to Lathom Junior School

Following my remote visit with Lisa Strong, 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, members of the senior leadership team and two subject leaders. 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:

- A class 'bubble' in Year 3 and 20 Year 6 pupils were self-isolating at the time of the visit. Since September 2020, approximately half of all pupils have had to work from home, including 20 pupils in Year 6 who have had to isolate twice.
- Pupils are learning their usual range of subjects. You have provided additional time for English and mathematics for all pupils in all year groups. Leaders have reduced the curriculum time for other subjects to accommodate this. You plan for pupils to return to the school's usual curriculum by summer term 2021.
- Teachers have assessed pupils' new starting points in reading. The checks have shown that pupils need to develop their fluency and comprehension. Leaders have adapted the plans for how reading is taught, to help pupils to catch up on these skills. You have prioritised reading across all subjects so that pupils have more opportunities to read high-quality texts.
- In mathematics, teachers have identified specific gaps in pupils' learning. For example, pupils in Year 5 need to catch up on their knowledge of area and shape. Leaders have revised their planning to provide links between different content in mathematics, for example division and decimals, so that pupils revisit prior learning before moving on to more complex aspects.
- Teachers have adapted the sequencing of the curriculum in other subjects. For example, in geography, pupils are revising subject content from the previous year while learning new knowledge and skills.

- Leaders provide digital access to remote learning for year-group bubbles who are isolating. Teachers either pre-record lessons or upload work for these pupils. When individual pupils are self-isolating, you give them paper copies of work to complete or details of websites to access. Spanish lessons are now pre-recorded as part of the school's pilot work with blended learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Sophie Welch
Her Majesty's Inspector