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Andrew Munday
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Munday

Ofsted remote visit to Ridgeway School

Following my remote visit with Fiona Webb, 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:

- At this special school, one 'bubble' consisting of two classes with pupils in Years 1, 3, 4, 6 and 7 was isolating at the time of the visit. Twenty five out of the 80 pupils on roll have been provided with learning opportunities at home since the start of term, when they have not attended school due to COVID-19. A few pupils with complex medical needs have not yet returned to school.
- Pupils are studying their usual subjects apart from food technology. In music, pupils' lessons are being taught online.
- Some activities, such as swimming, the use of an indoor soft-play area and access to some sensory equipment, are temporarily on hold. You plan to return to the usual curriculum by summer 2021.
- Teachers have assessed pupils' new starting points to identify gaps in their knowledge, skills and development. You are working with external agencies, including occupational therapists and physiotherapists, to support this work. You are using additional COVID-19 funding to support pupils' well-being, early literacy and numeracy skills.
- Teachers give pupils extra support to catch up with phonics. You are continuing to prioritise pupils' communication development. Speech and language therapists support this work with your pupils.
- For older pupils, you are prioritising experiences to boost their independence, including their preparation for adulthood. Students in the sixth form are

continuing with their accredited courses. Practical opportunities in the wider community, such as work experience, are currently not available.

- You have trained staff in the use of your chosen online system for remote learning. Teachers provide live lessons to deliver the curriculum to those pupils who are unable to attend the school. Teachers also provide a range of personalised activities to do at home to support pupils' individual needs.

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

Yours sincerely

Stefanie Lipinski-Barltrop
Her Majesty's Inspector