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Damian Pye
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Pye

Ofsted remote visit to Great Berry Primary School

Following my remote visit with Damian Loneragan, 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 and other leaders, including the senior leader responsible for safeguarding arrangements. 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:

- Pupils from one class 'bubble' in Year 2 are currently away from school and are self-isolating. Approximately a quarter of pupils have had to work from home, at some point, since the start of term. No bubble has had to isolate more than once.
- Pupils are studying their usual range of subjects. You have prioritised some subject content to ensure that key information is taught this academic year. Some content is being taught in a different order to normal.
- You have assessed pupils' current levels of understanding in all subjects. You have compared this to similar assessments that pupils undertook before the partial opening of schools in the summer term. You are using this information to guide you as to which pupils need more support.
- Some older pupils' ability to solve mathematical problems is less well developed than is normal for pupils of their age at the school. Younger pupils lack some number skills which they would normally have developed by now.
- In English, you have identified that many pupils find reading comprehension more difficult than is normally the case.

- Some younger pupils have weaker phonics knowledge than is typical. These pupils are following your normal phonics programme in the usual order. They are covering different parts of the programme later than they would have if schools had remained fully open.
- Some pupils have extra lessons before or after school to help them catch up in English or mathematics.
- Children in Reception arrived with weaker fine motor skills and less readiness to listen and pay attention than is normal for the school.
- If a bubble has to work from home, teachers will set work which is similar to the work pupils would have covered in school. Teachers will make contact with pupils at least once each day. If individuals have to self-isolate, they will be set work in English, mathematics and one other subject every day.

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 board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the Cresco Multi-Academy Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Essex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Hemmings
Her Majesty's Inspector