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Paul Whaling
Principal
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Dear Mr Whaling

Ofsted remote visit to Casterton Primary Academy

Following my remote visit with Sue Eastwood, 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, the chief executive officer, the executive principal and both of the assistant principals. 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 the visit, children in the Reception class 'bubble' and pupils in one Year 5 class bubble were working from home. Since the start of term, around half of the pupils in the school have spent some time working remotely.
- Pupils are studying their usual range of subjects, but some changes have been made to the curriculum content. For example, in physical education pupils are taking part in virtual sports competitions rather than meeting with teams from other schools. You told us that you expect pupils to return to their normal curriculum before the summer term 2021.
- Teachers' checks on pupils' knowledge in mathematics have shown that pupils have not remembered some learning, due to time missed in school since March 2020. Teachers found that pupils are less fluent in mathematics, as they have forgotten some knowledge about number and place value. Teachers are giving pupils additional time each day to revisit this aspect of learning.
- Teachers have also found that pupils have become less fluent in their reading, as they have missed or forgotten some vital knowledge. Teachers are providing additional reading sessions to help pupils catch up on this knowledge, including in phonics. You have purchased new reading resources to re-enthuse pupils' love of reading.
- In subjects other than mathematics and English, teachers have made checks on pupils' new starting points this term. In history, these checks show you that due to time out of school pupils in Years 3 and 4 have not remembered some of their previous knowledge about chronology. From physical education

sessions, teachers have identified that pupils have lost some of their fitness and stamina.

- Teachers make daily calls to help support pupils with online and paper-based education from home. Leaders have purchased additional laptops to enable more pupils to access online teaching.

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 and the chief executive officer of the Pendle Education Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Lancashire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Stevens
Her Majesty's Inspector