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Lee Gallon
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mr Gallon

Ofsted remote visit to Cheviot Primary School

Following my remote visit with James Duncan, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 1 December 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 head of school, the assistant headteacher and the family liaison officer. 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:

- Around 30% of pupils have had to learn remotely from home for a two-week period since September 2020, because they were self-isolating.
- Pupils are studying the usual range of subjects. You told us that pupils would normally study English, mathematics and topics that integrate all of the wider curriculum subjects across the year. You explained that, although this is happening, you have adapted the usual content in some subjects to help pupils catch up. You also explained that you have given more time to the 'care' curriculum and increased the amount of learning that takes place outdoors. You expect to return fully to the normal curriculum by Easter 2021.
- Teachers have completed their checks on pupils' starting points and used the information to adapt the curriculum. You explained that pupils have forgotten some knowledge in core subjects and lost some skills, such as in painting, in art. You told us that, this year, most teachers have moved up with their classes to maintain as much continuity as possible.
- In English, pupils are doing more frequent writing exercises to develop their stamina and their use of vocabulary. You told us that pupils initially struggled to add depth and colour to their writing when they returned in September.

- In mathematics, teachers have selected the content they consider to be most fundamental and have left some other content out. You explained that teachers are focusing on number and place value in particular this term.
- In wider curriculum subjects such as art, teachers have created some new projects to help pupils re-visit essential knowledge and to practise skills. You explained that more art activities are being done outdoors because this is safer and is helping to capture pupils' interest. In computing, pupils are covering more content that helps them to understand how to stay safe when online.
- The school is providing remote education to pupils who are not at school because they are self-isolating. You told us that your remote learning offer is moving increasingly online. You explained that you are training older pupils in how to access and complete online learning assignments. You also said that you are providing shorter learning tasks for younger children and providing more guidance for their parents about how they can support learning at home. Where possible, you are providing the same curriculum content for children at home as they would cover in school.

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 SMART multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Newcastle-upon-Tyne. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Chris Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector