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Nicola Brooke
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Dear Mrs Brooke

Ofsted remote visit to Durweston CofE VA Primary School

Following my remote visit with Marie Thomas, 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 and your senior 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:

- Since September 2020, approximately one sixth of pupils have had to spend some time working at home.
- At the start of term, teachers focused on the personal and social aspects of the curriculum to enable pupils to settle back into school. Since then, pupils have been studying all the subjects they usually would, but with modifications in some areas.
- After the first two weeks of term, teachers checked on pupils' knowledge in core subjects. Some pupils in Years 1 and 2 had gaps in their early reading skills. Teachers are making sure that these pupils receive extra help to build up their phonic knowledge.
- Pupils are spending more time reading in class. Leaders believe that this will help any pupils who have lost ground in reading.
- In mathematics, teachers are emphasising those areas of the curriculum that pupils are not as confident in. For example, teachers are spending more time teaching pupils about ideas in shape, space and geometry.
- Some parts of other subjects have been modified. For example, in physical education pupils take part in orienteering this term instead of rugby.
- Leaders have drawn up plans for providing remote education for any pupils who need to work from home. So far, a small number of individual pupils have had to do this, no class 'bubbles' have been sent home. If this happens in the future, teachers will set work online that is as close as possible to the work pupils would have been doing in class.

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 director of education for the Diocese of Salisbury, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Dorset Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Paul Williams
Her Majesty's Inspector