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Deborah Shepherd
Acting Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Shepherd

Ofsted remote visit to Bythams Primary School

Following my remote visit with Damien Turrell, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 26 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 school's safeguarding lead. 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 the start of term, a very small proportion of pupils have had to isolate for a short period of time.
- Pupils are studying all subjects in the school's curriculum. Some subjects have been slimmed down so that pupils can catch up in English and mathematics. Leaders plan to return to the full curriculum by the summer term 2021.
- Teachers have checked how pupils are getting on in reading. Checks have shown that pupils have fallen behind in phonics and that comprehension skills have weakened. Leaders have given more time to teaching reading, and have increased the amount of adult support that pupils get.
- Checks of pupils' writing show that some pupils are not using punctuation correctly. Some pupils are not spelling accurately. Leaders have put in place extra lessons to help these pupils catch up.
- Assessments in mathematics show that pupils are not using their calculation skills as well as they should. Leaders have increased the number of mathematics lessons that are taught. More staff have been employed to help pupils in lessons.

- Some parts of the curriculum have been put on hold. Swimming is not being taught and, in some year groups, pupils are not singing in music lessons. Pupils are studying a reduced curriculum in computing.
- When pupils have to isolate, teachers set work online. Work reflects the school's curriculum. Leaders know that some families will struggle to access online work if a class-group 'bubble' has to isolate and have plans in place to help with this.

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

Yours sincerely

Vic Wilkinson
Her Majesty's Inspector