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Richard Linsley
Interim Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mr Linsley

Ofsted remote visit to North and South Cowton Community Primary School

Following my remote visit with Gill Wild, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 5 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 base leader. 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:

- The school opened to all pupils on 8 September 2020. All pupils are expected to attend full time.
- Attendance figures are above the school's normal attendance for this time of year. You explained to us that fewer families were taking holidays during term-time this academic year.
- Subject leaders have amended the school's usual curriculum. You explained that some subject content has been temporarily removed in computing, and other subjects, such as food technology, are not being taught currently. Instead, pupils are revisiting their learning in reading and mathematics as well as participating in additional physical education (PE) activities with the aim of increasing pupils' fitness and stamina. You anticipate that pupils will return to their usual curriculum in January 2021.
- Teachers' assessments of pupils' reading identified that some pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 required additional support to recognise some sounds that are represented by three letters. You explained that additional COVID-19 funding has been used to purchase learning resources and reading materials to support pupils' reading across the school.
- In mathematics, teachers have noted that pupils' understanding and application of multiplication tables and fractions is not as strong as it used to be prior to COVID-19 restrictions. You explained that, this term, teachers are focusing on developing pupils' mental mathematics strategies.
- Subject leaders have also amended the usual curriculum in music and PE. You told us that, in music, pupils are learning how to play the ukulele rather than

brass instruments. In PE, COVID-19 restrictions have led to inter-school team competitions taking place virtually. You explained that pupils have had the opportunity to compete against other schools remotely in sports such as golf, archery and New Age Kurling.

- The school has 27 pupils on roll, acting as one 'bubble'. Should the school cohort have to self-isolate, you told us that pupils can access digital and paper-based resources that match the current curriculum. Additionally, teachers would speak to pupils and families each day to offer additional learning support if required.

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 North Yorkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lee Elliott
Her Majesty's Inspector