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6 January 2021

Richard Langford  
Headteacher  
Pontesbury CofE Primary School  
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Pontesbury  
Shrewsbury  
Shropshire  
SY5 0TF

Dear Mr Langford

### **Ofsted remote visit to Pontesbury CofE Primary School**

Following my remote visit with Ann Pritchard, 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 and members of the senior leadership team. 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:**

- Approximately 20% of pupils have had to work from home at some time this term. However, no class 'bubbles' have had to isolate.
- Pupils are studying all their usual subjects. You aim to enrich pupils' learning in school by providing them with activities such as 'virtual author visits' instead of off-site visits.
- You told us that teachers are using their usual assessment procedures in lessons to check what pupils remember and understand. These checks have identified some areas where pupils appear to have fallen back in their learning. Teachers are focusing on teaching these areas before moving on to teach new material.
- In English, teachers felt that some pupils in Years 1 and 2 were less confident in their phonic knowledge at the start of the term, and older pupils have found writing at length more challenging than they did previously. Teachers have focused on spellings, punctuation and rules of grammar for pupils of all ages.
- In mathematics, you have found that some pupils have forgotten key mathematical vocabulary. Others have become less confident with basic arithmetic skills, such as times tables.
- At the start of term, children in the Reception class were not used to being part of a large group. So, teaching initially focused more on personal, social and emotional development than in previous years.

- Individual pupils who are isolating access the work their classmates are doing through the school website.
- You have plans in place to provide remote education should a bubble have to isolate. It is your intention that teachers will set work using an online system. Pupils, or the parents of younger pupils, will upload completed tasks. You plan that teachers will then provide feedback, also online.

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 Hereford, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Shropshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Alun Williams  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**