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17 December 2020

Sarah Baker  
Headteacher  
West Exe Nursery School  
Cowick Street  
St Thomas  
Exeter  
EX4 1HL

Dear Mrs Baker

### **Ofsted remote visit to West Exe Nursery School**

Following my remote visit with Nathan Kemp, 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 lead teacher. We did not speak to children.

### **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:**

- A 'bubble' of 65 children aged 3 and 4 were self-isolating at the time of the visit. Since the start of term, a small number of children have had to self-isolate for short periods.
- All children study the full curriculum. However, leaders have adapted the curriculum for the outside space to reduce the potential for infection. Through ongoing assessments, you and your staff have noted that children's physical development has improved due to increased access to bikes and the outside space.
- You and your staff maintain regular checks of children's knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum. You have not identified any common areas of concern other than that some children have difficulty with self-care, such as dressing and toileting.
- You and your staff are continuing to prioritise the reading curriculum. Children listen to texts and 'read' texts every day. You and your staff conduct checks on children's phonic knowledge to inform the teaching of early reading.
- Teachers' assessment of children's mathematical development has not identified any common gaps in knowledge and skills. You have adapted the mathematics curriculum to suit the outside space.
- You and your staff have prioritised children's personal, social and emotional development throughout the curriculum. Staff are using key texts and the

outside space to enable children to explore their feelings about the world around them.

- You are concerned that external agencies have not assessed or worked with children face to face. You state that this has had a negative impact on children's development.
- The school's online system is used to provide remote learning. This system enables families to upload pictures of their children's work. You have also provided videos for children to learn phonics and music.

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

Yours sincerely

Susan Aykin  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**