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Tracy O'Donnell  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs O'Donnell

### **Ofsted remote visit to Epping Primary School**

Following my remote visit with David Milligan, 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, the senior leadership team and curriculum 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 the start of the autumn term 2020, over 40% of all pupils have had to isolate at home. At the time of our visit, two classes of Year 3 pupils were isolating and working at home.
- Pupils are studying the usual range of subjects. In some subjects, key content has been reprioritised and taught in a different order to normal. Leaders hope to return to their usual curriculum by summer 2021.
- When leaders assessed pupils' reading, they found some younger pupils had forgotten letter sounds that they previously knew. Some older pupils could not remember the meaning of certain words. Teachers are reteaching forgotten phonics knowledge and providing pupils with more opportunities to read a wider range of texts across all subjects.
- In mathematics, teachers found pupils had difficulty remembering their times tables as they had missed the usual daily practice in class. Teachers are combining a 'recovery programme' with their usual lessons, to address any missed or forgotten knowledge.
- Whilst the usual visits outside of school have been paused, leaders continue to support teachers to make use of the school's grounds and facilities, to teach 'outdoor learning'. Leaders have thought differently about events that are normally held in the school building. This term, pupils have taken part in virtual sports events with other local schools and there will be a virtual nativity play.

- The school uses a digital system to provide work at home for individuals and groups of self-isolating pupils. For those at home, teachers upload work that is similar to the missed lessons taking place in school. Teachers contact those working at home regularly to explain tasks and check pupils' work.

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

Yours sincerely

Damian Loneragan  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**