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06 January 2021

Josephine Walter  
Headteacher  
Hillborough Infant School  
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Bedfordshire  
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Dear Ms Walter

### **Ofsted remote visit to Hillborough Infant School**

Following my remote visit with Al Mistrano, 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, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher and the school's safeguarding and attendance officer. 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 small number of pupils have had to learn at home for reasons connected to COVID-19. The numbers of pupils having to do so, and the time they are away from school, have increased in recent weeks.
- Pupils are studying the usual range of subjects that make up the school's curriculum. Teachers have made some adjustments to learning activities or the order of topics. You are using some alternative experiences, such as linking virtually to a working farm, in place of activities that pupils would normally take part in.
- Teachers are using the school's usual assessments to check on pupils' skills and knowledge in reading. Teachers are spending more time than usual helping pupils, including children in the early years, to develop their reading and phonics skills. Adults are providing extra help to those pupils who need to catch up with their knowledge of sounds to support reading, writing and speaking skills.
- In mathematics, teachers' checks on what pupils have remembered from the previous year show pupils are less confident in their basic number facts than would usually be the case. Teachers are focusing on helping pupils to be secure in their understanding of this knowledge.
- Teachers across the school are helping pupils to catch up with letter formation and sentence writing.

- In other subjects, such as history, teachers have identified the knowledge that was not taught in the spring and summer terms. They have adapted their teaching plans for the current term to include this knowledge. You have also prioritised personal, social and health education to support pupils' well-being and help them readjust to working and socialising with others.
- You have provided remote education for individual pupils who have had to learn at home. This education consists of daily activities that link to what pupils would be learning in class. You recognise that access to appropriate devices, both for pupils and staff, is a barrier to providing remote education and you are seeking ways to overcome 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 Luton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Paul Wilson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**