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Ruth Williamson
Headteacher
Hetton-le-Hole Nursery School
Victoria Road
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Tyne and Wear
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Dear Miss Williamson

Ofsted remote visit to Hetton-le-Hole Nursery School

Following my remote visit with Carl Sugden, Seconded Inspector, to your school on 19 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 your senior team. 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:

- No groups of children or 'bubbles' were isolating at the time of the remote visit. Approximately one in three children have had to work from home at some point since September.
- All children are following their usual curriculum.
- Teachers are giving an increased focus to children's social and emotional development. This is because children need extra help at this time in managing their feelings and in learning to work and play with others.
- Teachers are using the school site in new ways to help children build a picture of the world around them. You explained that this is because children have had fewer opportunities to explore their local area.
- Teachers are using ongoing assessment to check children's early reading skills. Teachers have identified areas where children's early phonics knowledge is less secure than it was previously. Teachers are providing extra support to help children to catch up.
- In mathematics, teachers are building children's understanding of numbers, where they have noticed some gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- Staff have set up an online system which allows them to demonstrate learning activities to parents and children. This system enables staff to share learning resources online. Staff also provide parents with packs of resources to use with their children when they are learning from home.

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

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Kirtley
Her Majesty's Inspector