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Jonathan Walker
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Walker

Ofsted remote visit to High Beeches Primary school

Following my remote visit with Paul Wilson, 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:

- Since the start of term, approximately 2% of pupils have needed to work at home. On such occasions, pupils have had access to the school's provision for remote education.
- Staff are teaching all of the subjects in the school's curriculum. Leaders have altered some of the content within subjects for this academic year. Pupils can take part in clubs and listen to visiting speakers.
- Staff have checked what knowledge pupils remember. Staff have found that pupils need extra support to improve their writing. Leaders changed aspects of the curriculum and introduced small-group support sessions to help pupils catch up.
- Staff have been helping pupils to remember different styles of writing studied last academic year. Leaders told us that this is to help pupils improve their own writing for different purposes. In Reception and Year 1, staff have focused on helping pupils to improve their reading and writing by using phonics accurately.
- Staff have found that pupils need help to remember subject-specific terminology in mathematics. In Year 5, staff are paying extra attention to teaching pupils how to multiply numbers accurately.

- Leaders have created a history curriculum in Year 6 that includes elements of what would have been taught in Year 5 during the time of restricted access to school last academic year.
- Leaders have used the views of parents when creating the school's approach to remote education. Leaders have trained staff, pupils and parents in how to use the online provision. They have also ensured that all families have access to the online resources which staff provide for pupils who are working at 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 Hertfordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Al Mistrano
Her Majesty's Inspector