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Sara Wilkes
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Wilkes

Ofsted remote visit to Sharmans Cross Junior School

Following my remote visit with Catherine Crooks, 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 and 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:

- Forty-five percent of pupils have had to spend some time learning from home since the start of term. One Year 4 class 'bubble' has had to learn from home on two separate occasions.
- Pupils are studying the school's usual range of subjects, with a few adaptations to how things are delivered. For example, pupils are currently being taught in their class groups for all subjects. Your aim is to return pupils to the full content of the school's usual curriculum by the summer term 2021.
- Teachers have assessed what pupils know and remember in reading and writing. You told us that you are providing extra opportunities for reading and prioritising support for pupils who need help with their phonics. Teachers are focusing on putting back in place the basic things pupils have forgotten, such as punctuation skills, and rebuilding pupils' stamina for writing.
- In mathematics, pupils have undertaken similar assessments. Lessons are focusing on areas where you have identified that pupils are less confident, such as fractions or division.
- You told us that subject leaders have adapted the content of many subjects to include key elements which have been missed. Where possible, teachers are making links between topics. For example, in art, work on colour mixing has been woven into a study of Picasso's work.

- You provide remote education for individuals who need to learn from home. This includes access to daily English and mathematics lessons along with a range of other subjects. Where possible, lessons are linked closely to the topics being taught to the rest of their class.
- When class groups need to learn from home, you provide some live teaching via the internet to support pupils' learning. You expect all pupils to take part, and provide additional technology and resources for use at home if necessary. Teachers and teaching assistants keep in regular contact with all the pupils in their class.

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

Yours sincerely

Sandra Hayes
Her Majesty's Inspector