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Elaine Lynch
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Dear Ms Lynch

Ofsted remote visit to Huntingdon Primary School

Following my remote visit with Charlie Fordham, 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 senior leadership team, the history and physical education leaders and the pastoral support assistant. 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:

- At the time of the visit, the Year 6 'bubble' was isolating at home. Since the start of the autumn term, a third of the pupils have had to learn from home.
- Pupils are studying the usual range of subjects. Teachers are spending more time on English and mathematics to help pupils catch up on missed learning. Leaders said that the usual planned curriculum will be in place by summer 2021.
- Staff have checked what pupils have learned in all subjects. Leaders told us that they are focusing on revisiting knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics that pupils have not remembered.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 3 are receiving additional teaching to revisit important phonics knowledge. Staff are supporting pupils to read new words and to help them in their wider reading.
- Leaders' checks show that many pupils had not been writing as regularly when they were learning at home. Teachers are giving pupils more opportunities to revisit their understanding of grammar and spelling rules and to use this knowledge in their writing.
- In mathematics, pupils have forgotten important mathematical knowledge. Teachers are revisiting number work and multiplication tables. Teachers are supporting pupils to use their calculation knowledge when they are solving problems.

- Leaders have found that Reception children’s physical ability is less developed than it would typically be at this time of year, for children joining the school. Staff are planning more focused physical activities in children’s day-to-day learning.
- In all subjects, teachers are following the usual curriculum plans but they are adapting activities where necessary.
- Leaders have planned for remote education to be similar to the subject content that pupils would learn if they were in school. For those pupils who cannot access online learning there are paper-based copies available.

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 Cambridgeshire local authority. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Isabel Davis
Her Majesty’s Inspector