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06 January 2021

Tom Evans  
Headteacher  
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Hertfordshire  
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Dear Mr Evans

### **Ofsted visit to Martins Wood Primary School**

Following my visit with Wendy Varney, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 10 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.

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 special educational needs coordinator and the chair of the governing body. We did not speak to pupils because of the protective measures in place.

### **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 (coronavirus) 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, there were no class or year-group 'bubbles' isolating. At different points since the school reopened for all pupils in September 2020, different classes in Year 1, Year 5 and Year 6 have all had to learn from home.
- Pupils are studying the full range of subjects in your curriculum, but you have made some changes to the order of curriculum content. For example, in science, leaders are deciding on which content is essential, and needs to be taught straightaway, and which content can be covered as part of topics that are taught later. You hope to return fully to the school's usual curriculum by the summer term 2021.
- You have found that a significant number of pupils in Year 2 started the academic year with weaker knowledge of phonics than would usually be the case. You have put catch-up sessions in place to support these pupils. You have reallocated staff to provide extra opportunities for pupils in all year groups to read to adults more frequently.
- In mathematics, you have used teachers' checks on pupils' knowledge to identify their new starting points. You have used this information to help you plan for what pupils still need to know. For example, teachers have used a 'daily workout' approach to remind pupils of the names of shapes.
- In the wider curriculum, teachers have assessed pupils' knowledge and skills to identify gaps that might prevent them from accessing future tasks. For example, in design and technology, the subject leader has identified the

content that Year 2 pupils still need to be taught. Teachers have begun to teach this knowledge so that pupils can undertake a project on vehicles in the summer term.

- Your plans for remote education, whether for bubbles or for individual pupils isolating, aim to follow the pattern of a regular school day. They involve the use of online learning, where teachers can upload tasks and videos for pupils. For example, teachers in the early years have uploaded videos of phonics sessions for parents and children to watch 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

Richard Kueh  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**