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Dear Mrs Henderson

Ofsted visit to Bridgewater Primary School

Following my visit with Julie Barlow, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 9 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 senior leadership team and the learning mentor. 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:

- Since the start of this term, more than half of the pupils in the school have spent some time learning from home.
- Pupils are accessing all subjects in the primary national curriculum, with some changes. More time is being spent this term on focusing on pupils' social and emotional development, and the teaching of basic skills in English and mathematics.
- Plans are in place for teachers to check what pupils have remembered since March 2020 in subjects other than English and mathematics. Key subject content that was not taught in the summer term has been woven into teachers' plans so that pupils can catch up on what they have missed. You are endeavouring to return all pupils to studying the usual curriculum by the summer term 2021.
- Checks on where pupils are up to in their reading show that younger pupils have forgotten many of the letters and sounds that they had previously learned before March 2020. These pupils are receiving extra support to help them catch up. Older pupils are being given more opportunities to use their comprehension skills to help them regain lost knowledge.
- Assessments in mathematics show that pupils in all classes have forgotten how to use numbers to add, subtract, multiply and divide. Teachers are revisiting the teaching of these aspects before moving on to new mathematical content.
- Whole-class 'bubbles' and individual pupils who are self-isolating are provided with either online or paper-based resources to support their learning at home. The activities set broadly reflect the curriculum that is being taught in school.

- Pupils are accessing books and pre-recorded phonics sessions online. Teachers check pupils' work and provide feedback. Parents are provided with guidance on how to access remote education to help them support their children's learning 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 Salford. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Iwaskow
Her Majesty's Inspector