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Josephine Garnham
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Garnham

Ofsted remote visit to Meadowside Primary School

Following my remote visit with Chris Stevens, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 12 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 deputy headteacher, the safeguarding leader, the leader responsible for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the leaders for English and mathematics. 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:

- A very small proportion of pupils has had to work from home since the start of term.
- Pupils are studying their usual range of subjects. Staff have made adjustments to the curriculum, for example, by reducing practical activities in science and by avoiding singing in music lessons. Staff have introduced daily writing and grammar sessions designed to reinforce what was missed during the period when schools were not fully open.
- Educational visits and events such as sports competitions are not taking place. Leaders plan to resume the full curriculum before summer 2021.
- Teachers have carried out assessments to check pupils' new starting points in reading. This has led to an increased focus on phonics in Year 1. In other year groups, the stock of reading books has been expanded to cover more non-fiction topics and themes.
- Some pupils have lost confidence in tackling mathematical concepts. Staff have adapted their teaching and planning to take account of what was missed in the summer term. For example, staff have spent more time teaching place

value in Years 1 and 2, and division, perimeter, angles and basic arithmetic skills in Years 3 to 6.

- In other subjects, staff are carrying out checks to find out what pupils can remember. Staff are including extra links between previous and current topics, to address pupils' knowledge gaps. There is an increased focus on physical education, to boost pupils' physical fitness and mental well-being.
- Leaders can provide online and paper-based resources to support remote education. If a year group 'bubble' needs to isolate, staff will prioritise English, mathematics and an aspect of the current topic each day. In the case of individual pupils, the remote learning is customised to consolidate basic skills according to each pupil's needs.

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

Yours sincerely

Christine Watkins
Her Majesty's Inspector