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Amanda Edwards
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Edwards

Ofsted visit to Whirley Primary School

Following my visit with Pippa Jackson-Maitland, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 20 October 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 and your deputy headteacher. 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:

- You opened the school to all pupils on 2 September 2020. You shortened the usual length of the transition period for the Reception-age children by one week. Your aim was to settle these children quickly into the school's routines.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly similar to what it normally is at this time of year.
- All pupils are studying the usual range of subjects. You have made some changes to the physical education and music curriculums. For instance, pupils in Year 5 are learning to play string instruments rather than brass instruments. You plan for pupils to return to your usual curriculum by summer term 2021.
- You have checked pupils' knowledge in reading and mathematics. This information is helping you to identify and support those pupils who need to catch up. You have made use of the time gained through changes to the school day to deliver this support.
- In reading, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils are catching up with missed learning in phonics.

- In mathematics, you have found that pupils have not remembered how to solve multi-step problems as well as you would expect. You have adapted your curriculum plans to give pupils more opportunities to problem-solve.
- Pupils' subject knowledge in the wider curriculum is being checked as new content is introduced. This helps your teachers to identify and teach any knowledge that pupils have forgotten or missed.
- You have devised a remote learning programme that matches the school's usual curriculum. This can be delivered in the event of individuals, classes or the whole school having to isolate 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 chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of The Fallibroome Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cheshire East. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jackie Stillings
Her Majesty's Inspector