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Deborah Hindson
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Hindson

Ofsted remote visit to St Mark's C of E Primary School

Following my remote visit with Malcolm Kirtley, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 17 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 and the pupil welfare officer. 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 small number of pupils have had to work from home, for a period of time, since the start of term.
- All pupils are studying the full range of subjects that make up your usual curriculum. You explained that teachers have reordered the content of the curriculum in some subjects. For example, in physical education teachers are making greater use of outdoor learning, including cross-country running, earlier in the academic year.
- Teachers are using their assessments of reading, writing and mathematics to understand what pupils can remember from their prior learning. You said that teachers have used this information to adapt their teaching. For example, in Year 2, teachers are delivering extra phonics lessons to ensure that newly identified gaps are addressed.
- In mathematics, acting on their assessments, teachers are spending additional time teaching geometry, space, shape and statistics.
- Teachers are delivering content that was missed in the previous academic year in subjects such as geography. This content includes the use of coordinates in map work.
- The curriculum has been delivered remotely to groups of pupils, when needed. Teachers have provided online resources and workbooks for the pupils who have needed to temporarily work away from the classroom. The work that pupils complete remotely is the same as that delivered in class.

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 board of trustees and the chief executive officer of 1Excellence Multi Academy Trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Durham, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Stockton-on-Tees. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Carl Sugden
Seconded Inspector