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Lindsay Walton
Acting Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Walton

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

Following my remote visit with Naomi Taylor, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 11 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 and the senior leadership team, including those responsible for safeguarding. 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:

- Since the school reopened in September 2020, all pupils, with the exception of the Nursery Year, have had to work from home for periods of time. This represents approximately nine out of every ten pupils in the school. Currently, a class 'bubble' in each of Years 1, 2 and 3 is self-isolating.
- As well as English and mathematics, you have prioritised the teaching of physical education. You have focused on personal, social, health and economic education to aid pupils' return to school. Apart from modern foreign languages, pupils are studying all subjects from the school's usual curriculum. You plan to return to the full national curriculum by the summer term 2021.
- Across subjects, teachers have identified learning that was forgotten or not taught in the summer term 2020. Plans for this year are being developed to ensure that all missed curriculum content is delivered.
- In mathematics, teachers' checks on learning have identified that many pupils have forgotten some important number facts. More curriculum time is being spent on number. For example, teachers give pupils more time to practise and apply their times-tables knowledge to a range of mathematical activities.
- In reading, teachers have identified the letters and sounds that some younger pupils have forgotten. Additional phonics sessions are being taught to enable these younger pupils to catch up. Older pupils are spending more time revisiting vocabulary that has been learned previously.

- You explained that pupils who are self-isolating are provided with online learning or paper-based resources. A typical day consists of English, mathematics and two other curriculum subjects. Younger pupils also have an additional phonics session.
- You told us that staff monitor pupils' completion of learning. Staff provide feedback to pupils after they submit their work. Your systems also enable staff to provide support for parents to help their children access remote education.

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 director of education for the diocese of Blackburn, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Lancashire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Donald
Her Majesty's Inspector