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10 November 2020

Mr Darren Locke  
Headteacher  
Vine Tree Primary School  
Dane Bank Avenue  
Crewe  
CW2 8AD

Dear Mr Locke

### **Ofsted visit to Vine Tree Primary School**

Following my visit with Andrew Cook, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 8 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 the subject leaders for English and mathematics. 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:**

- The school opened to all pupils on 7 September 2020. You expect all pupils to attend full time.
- Since the beginning of term, pupils' attendance has been broadly similar to that during the same period last year.
- Pupils are studying their usual range of subjects with the exception of music, which you plan to reintroduce after the half-term break.
- Teachers in all classes have carried out assessments of pupils' reading. You told us that many pupils are not where you would expect them to be at this point in their new year group. You are addressing this issue by ensuring that reading features across all subject areas, with a strong focus on developing pupils' comprehension skills.
- Teachers have begun to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding in mathematics. They have found some gaps in pupils' learning, particularly in the areas that were due to be taught during the summer term. Additional time is being allocated for teachers to adapt the curriculum and to help pupils catch up on missed learning.

- During the first few weeks of the new term, your main focus has been to settle pupils back into school and support their social and emotional well-being. You have plans to check pupils' knowledge in the wider curriculum as the autumn term progresses.
- Since the beginning of term, you have provided work for any pupils who are unable to attend school. This has been through a combination of online and paper-based resources. You are reviewing this provision and focusing on how parents, carers and pupils can use remote learning tools more effectively in the event of any future restrictions.

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 Cheshire East. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Paul Tomkow  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**