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Oliver Flitcroft
Headteacher
Seaton Delaval First School
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Dear Mr Flitcroft

Ofsted visit to Seaton Delaval First School

Following my visit with Fiona Manuel, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 22 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 senior leadership team. 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 a full-time basis on 4 September 2020.
- Attendance is higher than usual for the school at this time of year.
- All pupils are studying the full range of subjects that are typically part of the school's curriculum. You have put a greater emphasis on reading, writing and mathematics since September so that pupils catch up on missed content. You hope to return to the school's usual curriculum by summer term 2021.
- Teachers have carried out checks on pupils' reading. They identified that some pupils need support with comprehension and some have gaps in their phonics knowledge. Leaders told us that some pupils are taking part in additional reading sessions to help them rebuild their reading knowledge.
- Teachers have used a range of assessments to check pupils' starting points in mathematics. Teachers have identified that some pupils need support with problem-solving and reasoning. Leaders told us that these pupils take part in additional catch-up sessions.
- Teachers have adjusted curriculum plans in science to cover content that pupils have missed. You told us that you want to ensure that pupils have the prior knowledge that they need before learning new content. For example, Year 4 pupils are currently studying science topics that would usually have been taught in the summer term of Year 3.
- Leaders have identified that some children in early years need additional support with developing their physical strength and stamina. You explained that teachers are spending time building children's muscle strength so that children are ready to develop writing skills.

- Leaders have developed plans to deliver the curriculum remotely, should it be required. Leaders told us that they have invested in some additional resources to expand upon the school's existing remote education package.

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

Yours sincerely

Graham Findlay
Her Majesty's Inspector