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The Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP
Secretary of State for Education

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Helen Osgood
National Officer, Education & Early Years Sector
Community
By email: LGough@community-tu.org

19 May 2023

Dear Helen,

Thank you so much for your letter of 28 March, about Ofsted inspection.

Ruth Perry's death was a tragedy, and my thoughts are with her family, friends and colleagues at this distressing time. My department is continuing to offer support to Caversham Primary School as the community starts to come to terms with this enormous loss. An inquest into Ruth's death has opened, and it is important that this is able to run its course.

I recognise that such a shocking event will inevitably fuel debates about reform of accountability and Ofsted. I also understand why some have asked for Ofsted inspections to be paused. My department does not think that would be the right thing to do.

Every part of the education system, including Ofsted, has its part to play in realising our shared responsibility to ensure that all pupils are able to benefit from a high quality education, and are kept safe. Ofsted inspectors, who are either former or current school leaders, work entirely to that end. The aim of inspectors is always to do good as they conduct their work.

Ofsted's inspections are hugely important in providing assurance to parents, the broader community and government on educational standards, pupils' wider personal development and their safety. Inspections recognise and celebrate successful practice and identify where there are weakness, so that improvements can be made for the benefit of pupils.

Inspection grades offer a clear and accessible summary of performance for parents. In some cases, the inspection grade triggers intervention and support to help schools get back on track.

Inspectors work to a Framework and School Inspection Handbook that was developed with great care and extensive engagement with primary and secondary schools as well as the wider sector. It is designed to recognise that schools are in different circumstances and face different challenges, while also setting high expectations so that pupils have the opportunities they deserve, whatever their background.

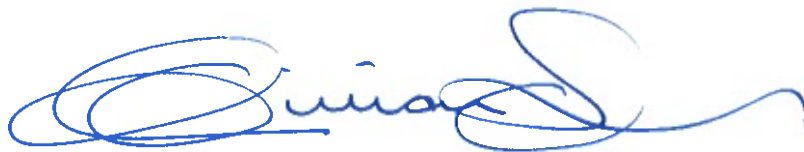
Through the Trust and School Improvement Offer, my department has provided targeted school improvement support to underperforming schools and trusts since the 2018/19 academic year. This support helped to drive school or trust improvement forward by identifying specific strategic actions for sustainable improvement.

This year, with evidence to suggest previous iterations of the support offer have helped secure improvement and build stronger relationships between schools and trusts - we have expanded the offer to a 10-day support model meaning eligible schools and trusts are able to access even more funding for school improvement. This will normally include a chief executive officer of a strong multi academy trust or national leaders of education helping the leadership team identify specific causes of underperformance and implementing sustainable improvements.

We always keep inspection arrangements under review, and will continue to do so, engaging with Ofsted and with the sector.

I hope this response is useful and appreciate you taking the time to write to me on this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gillian Keegan', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**The Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP
Secretary of State for Education**