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Claire McKeown
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Dear Mrs McKeown

Ofsted visit to St Thomas Cantilupe C of E Academy

Following my visit with Deb Jenkins, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 29 September 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, the senior leadership team and the senior leader responsible for safeguarding. 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 made 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 3 September 2020. Pupils attend school full time. The Nursery is open as usual.
- Overall attendance is broadly in line with what it was last year. You told us that there is an improvement in the attendance of disadvantaged pupils compared with this time last year. Leaders share their expectations about attendance in weekly newsletters.
- You introduced a new curriculum in September 2020 based on pre-existing plans to expand the range of subjects that pupils studied. You have made some adaptations to plans to reflect pupils' current needs. For example, there is a focus on activities that promote pupils' mental health and well-being. You have also prioritised language development in the curriculum.
- You have carried out checks on pupils' phonics knowledge and have used this information to plan learning for groups in Reception through to Year 3. You have identified that pupils in Years 3 to 6 need extra support with reading comprehension and have made this a daily focus. Teachers promote reading by linking key texts to each year group's topic.
- Pupils who have fallen behind in mathematics receive extra support. Teachers are focusing on number work and recall of number facts with all year groups.
- There are plans in place to provide remote education for pupils who are self-isolating or in any future lockdown. Your aim is to ensure that pupils would experience the same curriculum as if they were in school. You told us that many families struggle to access online resources because of difficulties

getting onto the internet and the availability of digital devices varies. As a result, there will be a mixed approach to remote education, with some pupils using electronic resources and others using paper-based materials.

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 interim executive board, and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Herefordshire, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Herefordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jo Evans

Her Majesty's Inspector