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Paul Beverton
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Beverton

Ofsted visit to St Thomas A Becket Catholic Primary School

Following my visit with Alice Roberts, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 6 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, your deputy, the inclusion manager, the special educational needs coordinator, the attendance officer and the leader for relationships, health, social and emotional education. 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 full time to pupils in Years 1 to 6 on 7 September 2020. Reception children attended half days for the first week and full time from 14 September 2020.
- Pupils' attendance is slightly higher than normal for this time of year.
- The school is currently teaching all its usual subjects except for computing, music, French, and the indoor aspects of physical education. Leaders have made this decision informed by government guidance. You plan to reintroduce each curriculum element as soon as possible and aim to teach the full curriculum again from Spring 2021.
- Teachers are carrying out assessments of pupils' new starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. They are using the assessments that would usually have been completed in the summer term. This process remains ongoing.
- In mathematics, leaders and teachers have adjusted the school's long-term plans which set out what is taught and when. You told us that this was so teachers could adapt their teaching to take account of content that was either covered remotely or not taught at all during the summer term. You say it has also allowed your teachers to concentrate on aspects of mathematics, such as place value and number.
- Reading is one of the two curriculum subjects you have prioritised. Extra time is being given to the teaching of phonics, letters and the sounds they

represent, in the Reception Year and Year 1. Leaders have introduced new expectations for whole-class reading across the school.

- The other subject the school has prioritised is relationships, health, social and emotional education. Teachers dedicated the first two weeks of term to this subject, linked to a whole-school story book. Following this, teachers picked up the curriculum from their usual starting points in other subjects.
- You plan to make sure that any remote learning aligns with your usual curriculum. At present, this might involve online learning or packs of work sent home in hard copy. You are exploring ways to increase 'live teaching' through the use of pre-recorded lessons.

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 Arundel and Brighton, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for East Sussex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Clive Dunn
Her Majesty's Inspector