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28 October 2020

Gillian Foan  
Headteacher  
St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School  
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Brighton  
East Sussex  
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Dear Mrs Foan

### **Ofsted visit to St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 1 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. I did not undertake the usual range of inspection activities and was 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, I spoke to you, the assistant headteacher, the senior leader responsible for safeguarding and special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the teacher in charge of literacy across the school. I 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. I 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.

I 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 Years 1 to 6 on 7 September 2020. Reception children started a week later on a phased basis until 21 September as is usual practice at the school. All pupils are now attending full time.
- Attendance at the start of term was a little lower than this time last year. As a result of families having to self-isolate, attendance in the last two weeks has gone down further. Staff keep in contact with these families to support pupils' return to school.
- All pupils are studying the usual range of subjects. However, because of COVID-19 restrictions, teachers have had to adapt how they would normally deliver topics. Leaders hope that by summer 2021, trips, visits and visitors to school can be reinstated.
- Staff have carried out assessments of pupils' learning in reading, grammar, punctuation and spelling, as well as mathematics. These show that pupils across the school have specific gaps in their knowledge and skills. Teachers have adapted their teaching accordingly to address these gaps.
- Teachers have noticed that pupils' comprehension skills in reading are not as strong as they were. This is true across year groups. Teachers have put in place strategies to help pupils recover these skills. The teaching of phonics has been adapted as well to help younger pupils make up for lost learning.
- In mathematics, teachers have found that pupils need to refresh their learning of place value, number, calculation and fractions.

- Across the wider curriculum, teachers are currently finding out what pupils have remembered from their learning last year. An immediate priority has been to ensure that physical education is delivered as teachers have found that pupils' fitness is not as strong as it was.
- Pupils unable to attend school are provided with work that follows the curriculum. This work will be available to all pupils, if needed in the future. Paper-based materials are made available to pupils who do not have access to online resources.

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, and the director of children's services for Brighton and Hove. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Yasmin Maskatiya  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**