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4 November 2020

Paul Norris  
Headteacher  
De La Salle School  
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Essex  
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Dear Mr Norris

### **Ofsted visit to De La Salle School**

Following my visit with Liz Smith, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 15 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 members of the senior leadership team, including the senior leader responsible for safeguarding pupils. 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 re-opened to pupils in Years 7 and 11 on 4 September. It re-opened to all other year groups on 7 September. Pupils are expected to attend full time.
- The proportion of pupils attending is broadly in line with normal attendance at the school at this time of year.
- The main adjustments you have made to the curriculum are to change the order in which some content is taught, remove creative media technology from the carousel of design technology subjects, and alter the amount of time allocated to teaching some subjects. You have introduced a new course on relationships and sex education. You intend to review these changes as the impact of COVID-19 develops over time.
- Across all year groups, teachers have carried out assessments to identify gaps in what pupils know. This information is currently being collated by leaders. Teachers also check pupils' understanding in lessons and adapt what they teach in line with what this tells them.
- You have identified gaps in pupils' English and mathematical knowledge in Year 7. You have given more time to teaching these subjects by delaying when pupils are taught a second language. Teachers focus on key concepts from the Year 6 curriculum at the start of each Year 7 mathematics and English lesson.
- Your priority in Year 11 is to support pupils with mathematics and English. You have employed extra staff to help with this.

- You plan to provide lessons remotely should the need arise in the future. This will combine lessons taught live via video conferencing, recorded lessons and other online resources for pupils to use.

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 Brentwood, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Essex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Hemmings  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**