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9 November 2020

Peter McCabe  
Headteacher  
St Simon of England Roman Catholic Primary School  
Noakes Meadow  
Ashford  
Kent  
TN23 4RB

Dear Mr McCabe

### **Ofsted visit to St Simon of England Roman Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit with Clive Close, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 22 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 your deputy headteacher. 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:**

- Your school reopened to pupils in Years 1 to 6 on 7 September 2020. Children in Reception had a phased start and were attending full time from 28 September 2020. All pupils are expected to attend full time.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly in line with this time last year.
- Pupils are studying their usual range of subjects, but some adjustment has been made to the content of certain subjects. All classes have started the year with a focus on reading, writing, mathematics, religious education, and personal, social, health and economic education. Leaders plan for pupils to return to their full curriculum by summer term 2021.
- In reading, staff have checked new starting points for pupils in Years 1 to 6. Staff have also checked younger pupils' new starting points in phonics. Leaders have increased the staffing in some year groups to provide additional support in reading and phonics for pupils who need it.
- In mathematics, staff have checked pupils' new starting points, including for children in Reception. Additional support is being provided for pupils who have gaps in their mathematical understanding.
- Staff have also begun to assess pupils' development in physical education and music. Leaders are developing plans to check pupils' new starting points across the wider curriculum in the coming terms.
- Leaders have plans to provide remote learning should this be needed. They will use a range of approaches, including digital learning with access to online libraries.

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 and the chief executive officer of the Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Archdiocese of Southwark, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Kent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Alice Roberts  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**