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Giselle Lynch
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Lynch

Ofsted visit to St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic High School

Following my visit with Rachel Goodwin, 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 and the senior leadership team, including 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 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:

- You opened the school to all pupils in September 2020. You asked each year group to return to school one at a time. By 11 September 2020, all pupils were expected to be in school full time.
- Pupils' attendance is slightly higher than it would usually be at this time of year.
- Pupils in Years 7 to 11 are studying all subjects that are normally on the school's curriculum. These include the subjects that pupils in Years 10 and 11 have chosen as their examination options.
- You have asked all teachers to cover the content that pupils have missed during the spring and summer terms. Social distancing restrictions are preventing teachers from delivering all aspects of a small number of practical subjects. You told us that this will be reviewed termly.
- You have asked teachers to check pupils' current knowledge and understanding in every subject. You explained that teachers are using this information to identify gaps that have emerged in pupils' learning during the period when schools were only open to some pupils due to COVID-19

restrictions. You have introduced time at the start of each day for pupils to work on the subject content that teachers believe is crucial for future learning.

- You have an online system that gives pupils access to the resources that they are using in class. You explained how this helps pupils to learn the planned curriculum in all subjects, if they cannot be in school. You plan to replace this with a new system so that teachers can provide additional online activities. You are supporting teachers so that they have the skills and confidence to use the new system for all pupils, should this be needed.

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 Archdiocese of Liverpool, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for St Helens. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Michael Pennington
Her Majesty's Inspector