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10 November 2020

Lee Walker  
Headteacher  
King Edward VI Church of England Voluntary Controlled Upper School  
Grove Road  
Bury St Edmunds  
Suffolk  
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Dear Mr Walker

### **Ofsted visit to King Edward VI Church of England Voluntary Controlled Upper School**

Following my visit with Fyfe Johnson, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 13 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 team of senior leaders, one of who is the deputy designated safeguarding lead. We did not meet with 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:**

- Following a rolling programme of welcoming back pupils in year groups, the school reopened to all pupils on 9 September 2020.
- Attendance in the first four weeks of term is lower than it was at this time last year. Leaders are working with the parents to encourage pupils who are persistently absent back into school.
- Almost all pupils are studying the usual range of subjects. A very small minority of pupils have part-time timetable arrangements to help them reintegrate back into school.
- Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 continue to follow the usual range of subjects. Staff are providing additional support in literacy and numeracy for a small proportion of pupils.
- In Years 10 and 11, pupils follow English, mathematics and science as well as the other subjects they have chosen to study. Leaders foresee no barriers that prevent pupils from following the school's usual curriculum this year. Some enrichment activities have been paused.
- Teachers are carrying out routine assessments in all subjects during lessons to determine how well pupils in Year 11 are doing. They are checking whether any gaps in learning have developed during the period when the school was only open to some pupils due to COVID-19 restrictions.

- Mock examinations usually held towards the end of this term have been postponed until January 2021. This is to ensure that Year 11 pupils are fully prepared for them and to provide staff with a clear indication of pupils' learning and progress.
- Regular assessments of pupils in Year 7 aim to provide staff with a clearer picture of pupils' abilities and interests and to determine which pupils need additional help with their reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders plan to build on the actions taken prior to full reopening that enabled pupils to work remotely, at home. Staff training and the preparation of online resources are ongoing.

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

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**