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Sarah Wilkinson
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Wilkinson

Ofsted visit to John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Aided Academy

Following my visit with Matthew Vellensworth, 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, the deputy headteacher, the chief operating officer of the trust, who was the headteacher until 1 September 2020, the senior leader responsible for safeguarding, and curriculum leaders. 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 opened to Year 7 and 12 pupils on 8 September 2020. It opened to Year 8 and 11 pupils on 9 September 2020 and fully to all year groups on 10 September 2020.
- Pupils' attendance is slightly below where it was at this time last year. Leaders explained that attendance has been affected by families' anxieties about COVID-19. Leaders talked about ways they are working with families to overcome this, such as offering one-to-one meetings in school and delivering mental health workshops.
- All the school's usual subjects are being taught. Leaders have made adaptations to some subjects this term, due to gaps in pupils' knowledge and the health and safety arrangements you have in place. You plan for the school's normal curriculum to be delivered from January 2021.
- Leaders have used a combination of standard tests and the school's normal assessment systems to check what pupils know and remember.
- English features highly on leaders' plans for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9, as it did before the COVID-19 pandemic. Curriculum leaders say that each faculty is checking where any gaps lie and considering the best way to help pupils catch up.
- Some adjustments have been made to the Year 10 and 11 curriculum for a small proportion of pupils. Leaders explained how, this year, they have brought additional training and experiences for these pupils in-house.
- The school has a system to deliver remote learning. Leaders explained how they have matched digital lessons to the school curriculum plan. Leaders say

that it has been important to check that everyone has the support they need to deliver and access online lessons successfully.

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 board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the director of education for the diocese of Leeds, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Kirklees. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kate Rowley
Senior Her Majesty's Inspector