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16 November 2020

Sam Smith  
Headteacher  
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West Midlands  
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Dear Mr Smith

### **Ofsted visit to Hawkesley Church Primary Academy**

Following my visit with Catherine Crooks, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 3 November 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 senior leadership team and 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:**

- The school opened to all pupils on Thursday 3 September 2020.
- Attendance is slightly below where you would expect it to be for this time of year. Leaders have worked with parents to reduce anxiety about sending their children to school and almost all pupils have now returned.
- Pupils are studying their usual subjects. Your aim is for pupils to catch up on the important content they have missed in their subjects by the summer term 2021.
- Teachers checked what pupils could remember in English and mathematics at the start of term. They are using this information to plan lessons which focus on the gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- Reading is now an even greater priority for the school. In key stage 1, you are giving more time for pupils to practise their phonics and develop their reading of sentences. In key stage 2, you have emphasised the importance of home reading and pupils' ability to understand the meaning of words.
- In mathematics, teachers are putting an extra focus on place value and number fluency. Your analysis of mathematics assessments indicated that pupils have the biggest gaps in these areas.
- You have given more time to the teaching of personal, social and health education in the wider curriculum. This is because you want pupils to re-establish relationships and be able to manage their feelings.

- You have plans in place to deliver the curriculum remotely should there be further local restrictions. Pupils will be able to access work through a mix of live and recorded online lessons as well as paper-based tasks. The content of lessons will be similar to the curriculum the pupils would experience if they were in school.

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 Birmingham Diocesan multi-academy trust, the director of education for the diocese of Birmingham, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Birmingham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mark Howes  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**