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Mr Brendan Robson
Acting Headteacher
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Dear Mr Robson

Ofsted visit to Cardinal Hume Catholic School

Following my visit with Gill Wild, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 20 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, members of your senior leadership team and subject leaders for science and mathematics. 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 for pupils in Years 7 and 10 on 3 September 2020. Pupils in other years were phased in over coming days, with all pupils expected to attend by 8 September 2020. A few pupils are attending part time while they adapt to new routines.
- Attendance has been in line with that normally seen at this time of year. At the time of our visit, you had a 'bubble' of 18 students in Year 12 who were self-isolating.
- Pupils of all ages are studying their usual range of subjects. In some subjects, teachers have adapted some content, such as reducing practical activities to maintain social distancing. You feel that you are on course to return to your usual curriculum by Easter 2021.
- Teachers are checking what pupils know and can remember from prior learning during lessons. Subject leaders told us this is giving a good picture of the gaps in pupils' knowledge. You explained that you will begin a week of further formal assessments in early November, so that teachers' understanding of pupils' current attainment is further enhanced.
- In Years 7 to 9, teachers are covering the content they would normally teach in the autumn term. You told us that teachers are checking how well pupils remember previous topics more often than they usually would.
- In Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form, teachers are following the same approach. You are providing some additional one-to-one or small-group tutoring for pupils in Year 11 to help them catch up. You plan to offer more

after-school classes this year, which will focus on teaching content that pupils have missed.

- You have plans in place to deliver the curriculum remotely, should this be needed. You are currently providing a combination of digitally recorded lessons, live lessons and uploaded materials for pupils who are self-isolating. You explained that you intend to remotely deliver something close to a normal timetable of lessons, including a morning tutorial period, should this be needed as a result of further restrictions in the future.

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 and the chief executive officer of the Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust, the director of education for the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Gateshead. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Chris Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector