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Mandy Messham
Headteacher
St Ethelbert's RC Primary School
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Dear Mrs Messham

Ofsted remote visit to St Ethelbert's RC Primary School

Following my remote visit with Simon Hunter, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 5 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. Following changes to government guidance and the imposition of COVID-19 (coronavirus) lockdown restrictions, we made this visit remotely to reduce pressure on the school.

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. We did not speak to pupils.

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 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 on 7 September 2020. All pupils are expected to attend full time.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly in line with their attendance rates at this time last year.
- Pupils are currently studying the full range of subjects except for history, geography and French. You explained that this is so more time can be spent helping pupils to catch up with reading, writing and mathematics. You plan to reintroduce these subjects in the spring term.
- Teachers have checked what pupils know and remember in English and mathematics. These checks have shown that pupils' use of vocabulary is not as strong as it was prior to March 2020. This is getting in the way of them reading with fluency and understanding. Teachers are spending more time on reading activities to help pupils catch up.
- In mathematics, teachers' checks have found that pupils are struggling with some topics, such as problem-solving and measurement. Extra time has been given to help pupils make up for lost learning.
- You recognise that pupils have missed the planned content in many subjects due to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 restrictions. Teachers are adjusting their planning so that any missed learning can be covered throughout the year.

- Teachers have been trained to deliver remote education, should the need arise. This remote education, which is online and paper-based, is aligned with your current curriculum. You told us that teachers will be able to monitor the quality of work that pupils produce when they are working from home.

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

Yours sincerely

John Tomlinson
Her Majesty's Inspector