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Anne Grice
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Grice

Ofsted remote visit to St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Following my remote visit with Naomi Taylor, 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 and the senior leadership team. 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:

- The school opened to all pupils on 2 September 2020.
- Pupils' attendance is above what it would typically be at this time of the year. All pupils are expected to attend full time.
- Pupils are studying all subjects from the primary curriculum. You have made changes in some subjects. For example, in music, you have changed lessons so that pupils sign instead of sing to music. You aim to return to the school's normal curriculum by summer 2021.
- Teachers have carried out checks to identify the subject content that pupils have missed in reading. You are making this subject a top priority this term to help pupils catch up. For example, staff are providing additional phonics lessons for younger pupils, and you have increased the online reading resources.
- The checks that teachers have carried out in mathematics show that pupils have forgotten some of their arithmetic knowledge. Teachers are giving pupils additional time each day to help them to recall and practise the content of their previous learning.

- In subjects other than English and mathematics, teachers know that pupils have missed some vital subject content to help them learn more and remember more. You told us that staff are adapting their teaching plans to help pupils cover this missed content and catch up over time.
- You are evaluating the school's systems for remote education. You are helping staff and pupils to become more confident using a range of online learning resources. You have considered how to deliver some practical curriculum areas remotely, including music and physical education.

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

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Stevens
Her Majesty's Inspector