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Peter McQuillen Strong
Headteacher
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Dear Mr McQuillen Strong

Ofsted remote visit to St Philip's Catholic Primary School

Following my remote visit with Jo Sharpe, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 10 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 head of school. 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:

- All pupils were expected to return to full attendance on 7 September 2020. Attendance is broadly similar to the same time last year. Since September, a number of pupils have spent some time working from home because of COVID-19 restrictions.
- Pupils are studying most of the subjects in their normal curriculum. Swimming is postponed until a later point in the year.
- In September, leaders used formal assessment to check pupils' knowledge in English. You have adapted the curriculum so that pupils in Years 2 to 6 have opportunities to rebuild writing stamina and read books that they may have missed because of COVID-19 restrictions. Assessment for Year 1 pupils identified gaps in phonics knowledge. Leaders have therefore focused on reteaching some of the Reception phonics curriculum to Year 1 pupils to address these gaps.
- In mathematics, leaders have focused on times table teaching in all years because of gaps identified through in-class and formal assessment.
- In science, leaders have identified that pupils missed out on practical aspects of the subject because of COVID-19 restrictions. The curriculum has been adapted to allow opportunities for pupils to complete practical activities. In music, leaders have adapted the curriculum so that pupils do not have to share instruments and sheet music.

- Your checks in Nursery show that children do not communicate with each other as much as they usually would. You have therefore prioritised activities which allow children to work together and develop teamwork skills.
- Leaders have organised pupils' remote education so that English and mathematics are covered every day. Pupils who self-isolate access classwork through the school website or paper packs. When whole 'bubbles' isolate, teachers are available online to support pupils at key points during the day.

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

Yours sincerely

Matthew Vellensworth
Her Majesty's Inspector