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Heather Pallier
Acting headteacher
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Dear Mrs Pallier

Ofsted remote visit to St Gregory the Great Catholic School

Following my remote visit with James Broadbridge, 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 members of the senior leadership team, including the senior leader responsible for safeguarding. 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:

- Small numbers of individual pupils have had to self-isolate since the start of the academic year.
- Pupils are studying their usual range of subjects with changes to make up learning that was not taught in school during lockdown. You aim for pupils to be studying the full curriculum by summer 2021.
- Teachers have checked what pupils remember and used this knowledge to help them plan lessons. Overall, they have found that the areas pupils needed help with before lockdown are even more of a priority now. For example, pupils who previously found reading tricky now need extra help. You are using some of the COVID-19 catch-up premium to address this by employing extra staff and purchasing additional resources.
- Teachers have found that pupils in Year 7 have missed key units of work in mathematics, so teachers are covering these now.
- You have prioritised access to specialist rooms for pupils in Years 10 and 11, so they can do their practical work in science and technology. However, this has reduced the access for pupils lower down the school.

- In the sixth form, teachers have changed lessons to focus more deeply on specific aspects of the curriculum. For example, in English Literature, students look in detail at key parts of a set text rather than go through it all together in class. You have moved work-related learning and careers education, information, advice and guidance online.
- When pupils have to self-isolate, they go online to access the same resources as the rest of the class. Teachers check work and provide feedback to pupils digitally. You plan to provide live lessons, if you have to send pupil 'bubbles' home. You know which pupils do not have access to the required technology and will provide paper resources, as needed.

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 chair of directors of the Dominic Barberi Multi Academy Company, the director of education for the Archdiocese of Birmingham, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Oxfordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lucy English
Her Majesty's Inspector