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25 November 2020

Ania Vaughan
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Dear Mrs Vaughan

Ofsted visit to Christ Church CofE (VA) Primary School and Nursery, Ware

Following my visit with Al Mistrano, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 3 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.

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, your deputy headteacher and two members of your curriculum team. 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:

- You opened the school to all pupils from 3 September 2020. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 attended full time. Nursery and Reception children had an extended phased entry over a longer period than usual.
- Attendance is slightly lower than usual. You are providing work for the few pupils who are self-isolating at home.
- When school opened, you identified that many pupils were anxious and concerned about the current pandemic. You noticed that for some pupils their stamina and concentration have deteriorated. During the first half term, teachers focused on addressing these concerns and supporting pupils' well-being.
- All pupils are now studying the full range of subjects, although the curriculum is not as broad as you had planned. No outside trips are taking place. Some aspects of music and computing are not being taught. There is no swimming. You have adapted your curriculum; for example, some physical education activities have been increased.
- Teachers are checking what pupils know and can do in mathematics and English. You have plans to check pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in other curriculum subjects at the end of the autumn term.
- You have identified that pupils' phonics and reading skills are not as secure as they should be. In Reception and Years 1 and 2, pupils are receiving additional

phonics teaching to address these gaps. In the rest of the school, there is an increased focus on developing pupils' grammar and vocabulary.

- You are pleased that pupils have retained their mathematical knowledge. In September, you were able to continue with your planned mathematics curriculum.
- You are providing a combination of online and paper-based activities for pupils who need to work at home. You intend that the activities will be in line with your current curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Cindy Impey
Her Majesty's Inspector