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26 November 2020

Pam Howell  
Headteacher  
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Gloucestershire  
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Dear Mrs Howell

### **Ofsted remote visit to St John's Church of England Academy**

Following my remote visit with Stewart Gale, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 17 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, the deputy headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding lead, and the school's curriculum leader. 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:**

- At the time of our visit, the Year 6 class 'bubble' was self-isolating. A small number of pupils have had to work from home since the start of term.
- Leaders say that pupils have returned to their usual curriculum and are studying a full range of subjects. Teachers have moved some content in geography to later in the year.
- Teachers have checked pupils' phonics knowledge in key stage 1 and for some pupils in Years 3 and 4. You have noticed that some younger pupils have forgotten how to pronounce several sounds. Staff have allocated additional teaching time to supplement the daily phonics session to help these pupils catch up.
- In mathematics, your staff have identified where pupils' gaps lie. For some older pupils, you have noticed that their grasp of fractions and percentages is insecure. In key stage 1, teachers are providing a greater focus on rekindling pupils' confidence when working with larger numbers.
- In the wider curriculum, teachers adapt their planning to incorporate knowledge that pupils have either forgotten or was missed when the school was not open to all pupils. Pupils participate in physical education lessons, but for the time being these do not include swimming. You have incorporated online safety guidance in all computing units of work as a matter of course.
- When learning remotely, key stage 2 pupils undertake mathematics, grammar and writing tasks daily. These pupils also complete an enquiry-based task that

links to the school's geography, art and history schemes of work. Younger pupils are provided with practical tasks and phonics activities.

- Teachers plan tasks that mirror the school's normal day-to-day curriculum. Leaders have made sure that all pupils have access to the schools' three online learning systems. Nevertheless, from time-to-time, families and staff report that the internet signal strength in the local area is unreliable.

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, chair of the board of trustees, and the chief executive officer of the Diocese of Gloucester Academies Trust, the director of education for the diocese of Gloucester, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Gloucestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Farr  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**