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Jacqueline Mulligan
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Dear Mrs Mulligan

Ofsted visit to St Sebastian's Catholic Primary School and Nursery

Following my visit with Pippa Jackson Maitland, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 4 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, the leadership team and other members of staff. 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:

- The school opened to all pupils, except those in the Nursery class, on 2 September 2020. All pupils are expected to attend full time. Nursery children started their sessions on 8 September 2020.
- You told us that pupils' attendance is lower than it usually is at this time of year. You are working closely with families to encourage pupils to attend school regularly.
- Children in the early years are following their usual curriculum. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are not currently studying art, music or personal, social and health education. These subjects were taught earlier on in the term, to support pupils' return to school and to develop their social skills and well-being. You intend to return pupils to their usual curriculum by summer term 2021.
- In the Reception Year, Year 1 and Year 2, teachers have checked pupils' knowledge of phonics. You are planning support to help those pupils who need to catch up on the letters and sounds that they have forgotten. You explained that, in Years 3 to 6, teachers are focusing on helping pupils to regain their reading fluency and comprehension skills.
- Teachers have checked what pupils have remembered in mathematics since March 2020. You told us that pupils have some gaps in their knowledge, for example in geometry and statistics. Teachers are revisiting some areas of mathematics to support pupils with this lost learning.
- Teachers have started to check pupils' knowledge in other subject areas. They are planning to adjust their curriculum planning to pick up any missed subject content.

- You have plans in place to provide remote education. Your remote learning matches your school's usual curriculum. You provide pupils with both paper-based study packs and online learning resources.

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

Yours sincerely

Adam Sproston
Her Majesty's Inspector