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Mark Ward
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Ward

Ofsted remote visit to St Thomas Church of England Primary School, Lydiate

Following my remote visit with Naomi Taylor, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 18 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, two acting assistant headteachers, the business manager and the attendance manager. 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:

- Since the school reopened in September 2020, approximately four pupils in every 10 have spent some time working from home due to COVID-19.
- Pupils are studying all the subjects that they usually would. You have prioritised pupils' personal, social and emotional development. You believe that this is helping them to settle back into school.
- Staff have carried out checks on pupils' new starting points in English and mathematics. They are using this information to amend these subject curriculums and provide support for pupils who have developed gaps in their learning.
- You have identified that some pupils are not where you would expect them to usually be with their reading skills. You have introduced more opportunities for pupils to read and to develop their comprehension skills across the curriculum.
- In mathematics, your staff have noticed that some pupils are finding it difficult to remember and apply some mathematical concepts. Staff are providing additional support for pupils to catch up with lost knowledge. For example, staff are helping to refresh older pupils' knowledge of fractions and decimals.
- In subjects other than English and mathematics, teachers are including some of the subject content that pupils missed during the spring and summer terms 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions.

- Your staff team has provided work for any pupils or class 'bubbles' who have had to self-isolate due to COVID-19. You explained that the provision for remote education is closely linked to the curriculum that pupils would usually experience in school. Staff are able to set and monitor pupils' work.
- You told us that pupils engage well with online learning and that parents support their children to access remote learning resources.

Thank you again for contributing to this important national work. The views and experiences you shared will help to inform future policy.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Liverpool Diocesan Schools multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Liverpool. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Ahmed Marikar
Her Majesty's Inspector