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2 December 2020

Marie Hendry  
Head of School  
South Marston Church of England Primary School  
Old Vicarage Lane  
South Marston  
Swindon  
Wiltshire  
SN3 4SH

Dear Mrs Hendry

### **Ofsted remote visit to South Marston Church of England Primary School**

Following my remote visit with Julie Carrington, 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 attendance officer and a school improvement partner from the diocese of Bristol academies trust. 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 returning to school in September, one in three pupils have had to self-isolate and work from home. No pupils were working from home at the time of our visit.
- Pupils are studying their usual subjects. You have temporarily increased the teaching time in some areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils now take part in a daily 'fit in five' activity to support their physical health and well-being.
- Staff have carried out checks to find out pupils' new starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers have identified that some pupils need additional reading and writing support. Teachers are adjusting their teaching plans accordingly.
- Reading, including phonics, is a school priority. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have an extra phonics lesson each day. You told us that new strategies, such as 'reading miles', are encouraging all pupils to practise their reading skills.
- In mathematics, teachers are focusing on pupils' recall of important number facts and times tables.

- You have systems in place to deliver remote learning to individuals or groups of pupils if needed. You have provided additional training to enable your staff to do this. You plan for teachers to give daily feedback to pupils who are working remotely.

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 chief executive officer of the diocese of Bristol academies trust, the director of education for the diocese of Bristol, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Swindon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Dale Burr  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**