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Janet Lightfoot
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Lightfoot

Ofsted remote visit to St Matthew's Church of England Primary School

Following my remote visit with Louise Walker, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 10 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 and the assistant headteacher. 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:

- A small proportion of pupils have had to work from home at times since the start of the autumn term. This is due to individual pupils' needs and circumstances.
- Pupils are studying the school's usual range of subjects. However, leaders have made changes to the way that some aspects of the curriculum are delivered. For example, swimming lessons are not taking place for the time being, residential trips have been postponed and music lessons are taking place in the hall, rather than in the classrooms. Leaders are hopeful that previous arrangements can be reinstated soon and intend to return to the usual curriculum by summer 2021.
- Teachers' assessments indicate that pupils' reading skills have not been adversely affected by the period of national restrictions. However, some pupils need reminders about phonics. Leaders are using the Covid-19 catch-up premium to support pupils' phonics knowledge.
- Teachers are using questioning to check pupils' mathematical knowledge. They are pleased that pupils' recall of facts, including times tables, have been largely unaffected by the COVID-19 restrictions. Teachers are giving pupils more opportunities to complete mathematical problems because pupils are finding these more difficult than before.
- Leaders are responding to pupils' needs across the wider curriculum as required. For example, teachers noticed that some pupils' fitness levels have

dropped during the period of national restrictions, so are using activities such as playground games, forest school sessions and physical education lessons to increase pupils' physical activity.

- Leaders intend pupils to follow the school's daily timetable when learning at home, either digitally or through paper-based learning. Leaders have provided training for staff, pupils and parents so that they are more confident about digital learning. Leaders have delivered paper-based learning packs to families who are not able to access digital learning. The packs cover all subjects studied in school currently.

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 board of trustees, and the chief executive officer of the SDBE multi-academy trust, the director of education for the diocese of Southwark, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Surrey. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Julie Sackett
Her Majesty's Inspector