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Margaret Yates
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Dear Mrs Yates

Ofsted remote visit to St Augustine's Catholic Academy

Following my remote visit with Eve Morris, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 26 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 head of school, who is also the senior leader responsible for safeguarding, the deputy headteacher, the transition leader and the family support worker. 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 September 2020, a small number of pupils have had to work from home at some point.
- At the start of term, leaders introduced a three-week focus on pupils' well-being and literacy and numeracy. Leaders said that this was to help pupils settle back into school. All pupils have been studying their usual range of subjects since October half term.
- Teachers' checks have shown that pupils need extra work to support their reading. As a result, pupils now have more English lessons during the week. In all subjects, teachers also plan extra opportunities in lessons for pupils to practise their reading.
- Phonics checks have shown that Year 1 pupils have gaps in their phonics knowledge. As a result, you have adapted your phonics teaching to include a focus on learning the trickier words.
- In mathematics, leaders have found that pupils need time to revisit and practise prior learning before they can apply it. Leaders have added more mathematics lessons into the weekly timetable to help with this.

- You continue to teach the wider curriculum, but teachers have needed to make some changes. For example, leaders say it is not possible to offer the usual educational visits at the moment. Therefore, leaders have organised virtual off-site visits so that pupils do not miss out on these experiences.
- Leaders are providing remote education to pupils who are currently self-isolating. This includes live lessons. Should there be a need for pupils to be taught remotely in the future, you are confident about continuing with this approach.

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 academy committee, the chair of the board of trustees of the All Saints Catholic Collegiate multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Birmingham, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Stoke-on-Trent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lesley Yates
Her Majesty's Inspector