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David Bower
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Bower

Ofsted remote visit to Ashton St Peter's VA Church of England School

Following my remote visit with Kim Hall, 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 and your deputy 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:

- Since the beginning of term, a few pupils have been isolating at home for short periods of time. No 'bubbles' have been learning from home.
- All pupils are studying the full range of subjects. You have prioritised pupils' well-being and expect to return pupils to the full curriculum content before summer 2021.
- You have checked what pupils know and can do in reading, writing and mathematics, and have identified the things that pupils have not remembered from their prior learning. You are checking that teaching staff are adapting lessons on a daily basis, to reinforce key concepts. You have not yet checked what pupils know and can do in other subjects.
- Teachers identified that pupils struggled to write at length when they first returned to school. Teachers are also having to remind pupils about applying basic punctuation skills to their writing. You are providing more opportunities for pupils to apply writing skills in other subjects.
- Through your assessments of pupils' reading skills, you have identified that pupils in Years 1 and 2 need extra practice with their phonics (letters and the sounds they represent). You also identified that pupils further up the school have fallen behind in some aspects of understanding texts. Teachers are adapting their teaching to help pupils catch up.
- You have identified that pupils in Years 3 to 6 have retained their knowledge and understanding of number. Teachers are now focusing teaching on space,

shape and data handling. Younger pupils are having more practice in lessons, to secure their number skills.

- Teachers have adapted their teaching, to continue to give pupils practical experiences in lessons such as science and design and technology. Visitors are still coming into the school to enhance pupils' learning in the wider curriculum.
- Your remote education consists of online and live teacher-led learning as well as paper-based activities. Individual pupils isolating at home are receiving the same curriculum as those in school.

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 director of education for the Diocese of St. Albans, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Central Bedfordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Cindy Impey
Her Majesty's Inspector