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Jill Sandvig, Jo Berry and Jo Measham  
Executive Headteacher and Joint Heads of School  
St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Ipswich  
Woodbridge Road  
Ipswich  
Suffolk  
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Dear Mrs Sandvig, Mrs Berry and Mrs Measham

### **Ofsted remote visit to St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Ipswich**

Following my remote visit with John Mitcheson, 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 the executive headteacher, one of the heads of school, and a senior leader with responsibility for key stage 2. 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:**

- There were no class or year-group 'bubbles' isolating at the time of the visit. Since the school opened to all pupils on 4 September 2020, there have been a very small number of pupils who have had to work from home while awaiting tests for COVID-19.
- Pupils are studying the normal range of subjects. How and when the wider curriculum is taught has been amended to support leaders' 'recovery curriculum' in reading, writing and mathematics. In this curriculum, pupils revisit aspects of the learning from the previous year before moving onto the usual curriculum that they would be studying.
- Leaders feel that the rate that pupils are working at means that most year groups will have effectively caught up by the summer term 2021, and all year groups will be studying the usual curriculum.
- Leaders have used a commercial system to review how much pupils know and can do within their recovery curriculum. Leaders feel that this curriculum is allowing most pupils to catch up with missed learning in reading and mathematics.
- Leaders have identified that pupils' fluency in their writing is weaker than their skills in reading and mathematics. Leaders are developing more opportunities both in English and across the wider curriculum for pupils to apply their understanding of spelling, punctuation and grammar to extended written pieces.
- Where there are individual pupils who need further support, leaders are using the additional COVID funding to provide a range of interventions, including after-school tutoring programmes for individual pupils.

- Leaders have delivered a remote curriculum since September 2020 for a small number of pupils who have had short periods of isolation. This curriculum has matched the curriculum available to pupils on the school site. Some of this has been digital and some has been paper-based.
- Leaders have used COVID funding to ensure that they have the digital equipment for both staff and pupils should there be a wider-ranging need for remote learning. Leaders are still looking into how they would facilitate remote education for the very youngest children, such as those in Reception, or for some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who may struggle with remote learning.

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, chair of the board of trustees, and the chief executive officer of Our Lady of Walsingham Multi-Academy Trust, the director of education for the Diocese of East Anglia, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Suffolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kim Pigram  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**