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25 January 2021

Margaret Jackson
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Jackson

Ofsted remote visit to Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Following my remote visit with Jo Olsson, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 1 December 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 the senior leadership team. 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 start of term, approximately one third of pupils have had to learn from home for a short period of time.
- Pupils are studying their usual range of subjects, although some curriculum content has been moved around. For example, this term, pupils are playing musical instruments rather than singing. The usual curriculum will be resumed by summer 2021.
- Teachers have carried out checks in mathematics to find out what prior learning pupils have forgotten since March 2020. The main weakness, that teachers identified, was in pupils' knowledge and understanding of arithmetic. As a result, you have introduced daily morning sessions across the school, during which pupils work on basic number operations.
- Your checks on pupils' reading abilities showed that most older pupils have not fallen behind with their reading. However, in September 2020, you were concerned that some younger pupils had forgotten some of the sounds and letters that they had previously learned. You told us that your most recent checks on their phonics knowledge showed that these pupils were catching up.
- You recognise that the disruption, caused by the COVID-19 restrictions, led to pupils not learning all the planned content in subjects other than English and

mathematics. You told us that teachers are adapting their plans, during this academic year, to ensure that relevant curriculum content in all subjects is covered.

- You have developed a range of online resources to support pupils who have been unable to attend school due to COVID-19. Wherever possible, teachers provide work that is matched to what pupils are learning in school. You told us that pupils have engaged well with remote learning and that you now require every pupil to take part in an online learning activity each week from home.

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 Shrewsbury, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Wirral. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Paul Tomkow
Her Majesty's Inspector