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John Lane
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Lane

Ofsted visit to Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Following my visit with Andrea Bedeau, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 21 October 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.

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 because of the protective measures in place.

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 (coronavirus) 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:

- The school opened to pupils in Years 1 to 6 on 2 September 2020. Children in the Reception Year and in the Nursery started on 7 and 14 September 2020, respectively. All pupils attend full time in Reception through to Year 6.
- Attendance is broadly in line with what it would normally be at this time of year.
- Pupils are being taught the usual range of subjects, but with some changes to the curriculum content. For example, in music, as whole-class singing is not happening, body percussion is being taught instead. Leaders expect to return to their usual curriculum in January 2021.
- Checks made in September revealed gaps in pupils' phonics knowledge and weaknesses in reading comprehension. In response, additional intervention is being provided to help pupils learn their missing sounds. Teachers are using high-quality texts to help pupils read widely and often, and build their vocabulary.
- In mathematics, teachers have checked what pupils know. Some pupils are not able to recall their times table facts rapidly. All year groups have an additional weekly mathematics lesson, and interventions to help specific pupils catch up.
- You told us of your concerns around pupils' physical and emotional health. Physical education has been prioritised with a greater focus on activities such as high-intensity interval training and yoga.
- Remote learning is provided, via an online platform, to those pupils unable to attend school. The activities uploaded align with the school's curriculum.

Leaders have plans to develop the feedback system so teachers can best support pupils who are learning remotely.

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 Westminster and the director of children's services for Islington. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Alison Colenso
Her Majesty's Inspector