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Sarah Terrey
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Terrey

Ofsted remote visit to St Catherine's Roman Catholic School

Following my remote visit with Jen Southall, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 5 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 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 with you, the deputy headteacher and the early years foundation stage leader. 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 (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 all pupils on 7 September 2020.
- Pupils' attendance is above the usual figure seen at this time of year.
- All pupils are studying every subject of the curriculum. You redesigned the school's curriculum during the spring term 2020. Your curriculum priorities are to help pupils catch up, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Since September, you have modified the school's curriculum. As a result, some aspects of computing, physical education and music are not currently being taught. However, you plan to return pupils to the normal curriculum by the summer term 2021.
- Teachers have checked to find out what pupils know and can remember in reading and phonics, writing and mathematics. Teachers are using this information to plan work to help pupils catch up.
- Reading is a priority. You are focusing on improving pupils' phonic knowledge, particularly in Years 1 to 3. You also want to improve pupils' understanding of what they are reading.
- Teachers have identified gaps in pupils' knowledge of number and related facts, such as times tables, particularly in Years 3 to 6. You have made it a priority to help pupils with their number work in mathematics.
- You have plans to deliver the curriculum remotely, should this be needed. Teachers will use a combination of paper packs and digital programmes to

deliver the curriculum and maintain communication between home and 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 board of trustees and the chief executive officer of Plymouth CAST multi-academy trust, the director of education for the diocese of Plymouth, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Dorset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Stewart Gale
Her Majesty's Inspector