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27 November 2020

Andrew Truby  
Executive Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Truby

### **Ofsted remote visit to St Joseph's Catholic Primary School**

Following my remote visit with Chris Cook, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 12 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 senior leaders and other colleagues, including those responsible for safeguarding. 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:**

- The school opened fully to all pupils on 2 September 2020. A small number of pupils have had to work from home since the start of term.
- Pupils are studying all of the subjects that you would normally be covering at this time of year, although the amount of teaching time allocated to each subject has been slightly adjusted. This is to allow teachers to cover some of the content that was missed during the time when school was not fully open during the spring and summer terms 2020. You are planning for pupils to return to their usual curriculum before the summer term in 2021.
- You have assessed pupils' new starting points in reading. You found that some pupils fell behind during the period when school was partially shut, and as a result you have allocated additional time to reading in class. With younger pupils, teachers have committed more time to help emphasise the importance of phonics. You believe this focus will allow your pupils to make up the lost ground in their early reading and their knowledge of phonics.
- Assessments of pupils' knowledge in mathematics showed that many pupils had remembered the basic number facts. You identified that in the early years, pupils' number formation had deteriorated. Staff are using this information to plan future lessons.
- All the subjects within the wider curriculum are being taught. Some activities that were not being taught at the start of the term, such as practical science lessons and singing sessions, are now being delivered.

- You are providing remote education for pupils who are having to isolate from school, using a range of technologies and resources to deliver this. This now includes some 'live lessons' where pupils who are isolating are able to interact with the lessons taking place in school, often when English and mathematics are being taught. You told us that the work you are providing for those in isolation broadly matches the content pupils would be covering if they were 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 accounting officer of the Hallam Schools' Partnership Academy Trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Hallam, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Sheffield. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

James Duncan  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**