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Alison Toward
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Toward

Ofsted visit to St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit with Debbie Redshaw, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 13 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 members of 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 all pupils on 2 September 2020. All pupils are expected to attend the school full time.
- Pupils' attendance is slightly higher than it usually is at this time of year.
- All pupils are studying their usual range of subjects. Leaders told us that staff have been given more flexibility to focus on personal, social, health and economic education and physical education. This is because leaders want to prioritise pupils' physical and mental well-being.
- Leaders intend that teachers will teach the usual curriculum in all subjects before the summer term 2021, including extra-curricular opportunities.
- Leaders assessed pupils' new starting points this term following COVID-19 restrictions. In reading, this showed gaps in pupils' knowledge of phonics. Assessments in mathematics showed gaps in pupils' knowledge of number and place value.
- Leaders explained that teachers are dedicating more time to reading and mathematics in all year groups to address these gaps. Teachers are using a range of additional whole-class and targeted interventions to support pupils in these subjects.
- Leaders say that they plan for remote education to match what is being taught in school. This learning will include a mix of online teaching and other resources, some of which will be paper-based.

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 chief executive officer of the Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Middlesbrough, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for North Yorkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tim Jenner
Her Majesty's Inspector