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Gary Watson
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Watson

Ofsted remote visit to St John's Church of England Academy

Following my remote visit with Mark Howes, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 19 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 you, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher and two members of staff responsible for managing some subjects of the school's curriculum. 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 reopening the school on 2 September 2020, one year-group 'bubble' was sent home in the middle of September to self-isolate for two weeks because of COVID-19. So far, this is the only time you have had to send a bubble home. There are currently no pupils or families self-isolating from school.
- Nearly all pupils are attending school. This is a similar picture to the same time last year. You told us that parents are supportive and have the confidence to return their children to school.
- Pupils are studying all their usual subjects, including the normal weekly teaching of French in Years 3 to 6. You and your leaders told us that some practical activities, such as geography field studies and educational visits, have been put back to at least the spring term. A recovery curriculum started in September to help pupils catch up on the learning they missed during the previous school closure.
- Assessments in September showed that pupils lacked the confidence to read with their normal fluency. Teachers found that some pupils forgot some grammar, spelling and punctuation rules when writing independently. Teachers are providing additional opportunities for pupils to practise writing in other subjects, for example in geography, when pupils in Year 4 study the 'water cycle'.
- In the Reception class, your staff told us that many had missed their normal pre-school experiences, so staff focused on developing children's speech and

language to help them communicate and socialise with others. Younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 also slipped in their knowledge of phonics when reading new words. In mathematics, your assessments showed that pupils needed to catch up most in their knowledge of fractions and time.

- The staff use what you call 'shine time' sessions to revisit and address any missed learning. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to have additional sessions in groups or one-to-one with an adult. These focus on learning that pupils missed or forgot. The staff will assess pupils' learning at the end of this term to see if they are ready to return to the school's full range of curriculum activities in the spring term 2021.
- Your staff have prepared home-learning resources which combine online and paper-based resources for pupils to use when not in school. Teachers are also preparing more 'video lessons' and resources in case of any future need for pupils to self-isolate.

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 Dioceses of Coventry multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Church of England diocese of Coventry, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Coventry local authority. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou
Her Majesty's Inspector