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Nigel Ranson
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Ranson

Ofsted visit to Our Lady's Catholic High School

Following my visit with David Selby, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 1 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, the deputy headteacher, three assistant headteachers, the senior leader responsible for safeguarding and the school business manager. 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:

- You opened the school to all pupils on 1 September 2020. All pupils are attending full time.
- Pupils' attendance is slightly below your usual figure for this time of year. You have adjusted your systems to encourage better attendance. This is allaying the anxieties of pupils, parents and carers.
- All pupils in the school are following their normal curriculum subjects. You explained that there have been some minor changes to the order in which some topics are taught in music and physical education. You told us that you have not been able to run your usual programme of after-school activities and visits.
- Teachers are focusing on building pupils' confidence in their learning. Teachers are using their usual approaches to check how well pupils are progressing in their subjects. Teachers are addressing any gaps in pupils' knowledge as they emerge.
- The curriculum for Years 7, 8 and 9 is running as normal. However, in mathematics, you have put in an additional module to support Year 7 pupils with their transition from Year 6. Similarly, in Year 7, you are focusing on developing pupils' reading skills. Teachers are using their knowledge of the key stage 2 curriculum to support Year 7 pupils with any gaps in their learning.

- In Years 10 and 11, all pupils are studying the subjects that they have chosen for GCSE and vocational courses.
- Currently, you are offering remote education to any pupils who are isolating. You are looking to expand this so that teachers can deliver live lessons online, should this be needed. You have prepared for this by training staff and purchasing some equipment.

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 Lancaster, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Lancashire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Rachel Goodwin
Her Majesty's Inspector