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Ben Davis
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Davis

Ofsted remote visit to St Ambrose Barlow RC High School

Following my remote visit with Rachel Goodwin, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 26 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, members of the senior leadership team including the senior leader responsible for safeguarding, and a group of subject leaders. 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 the start of September, over half of all pupils have learned from home on at least one occasion. Some pupils in Year 10 have had to self-isolate three times and some pupils in Year 11 have had to self-isolate four times. Groups of pupils from the Year 7 and Year 9 'bubbles' are currently self-isolating.
- Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are studying all of the subjects that are usually on the school's curriculum. You have reduced the amount of time that pupils study languages and science. This is so that pupils can have more time to learn about personal, social and health education. You plan to return to the usual allocation of time for each subject by the summer term 2021.
- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are studying all of their examination subjects. You told us that pupils stay in subject areas each day to reduce movement around the school. You explained that this means that pupils sometimes study one subject for a full day.
- You explained that teachers are checking what pupils can remember about the subject content that they covered prior to March 2020. Teachers are using this information to build missed or forgotten learning into the units of work they are already covering this term.
- You have systems in place so that pupils can learn when they are not in school. You told us that most pupils use an online system to access resources

in all of their usual subjects. You provide paper-based resources for the small number of pupils who cannot access your online systems.

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

Yours sincerely

Michael Pennington
Her Majesty's Inspector