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20 November 2020

Catherine Pointon  
Headteacher  
St Giles' and St George's Church of England Academy  
St Paul's Road, Off Orme Road  
Newcastle  
Staffordshire  
ST5 2NB

Dear Mrs Pointon

### **Ofsted remote visit to St Giles' and St George's Church of England Academy**

Following my remote visit with Lesley Yates, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 5 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 assistant headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, the pastoral leader and the early years leader. Some of these leaders are also 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:**

- You opened the school to all pupils on 2 September 2020. All pupils are expected to attend full time.
- Attendance is currently in line with what it was this time last year.
- Pupils are studying the full range of subjects. However, planned swimming lessons for this term are not taking place. Currently, educational visits and residential trips are being replaced with alternative activities in school. You expect pupils to return to their usual curriculum by the summer term 2021.
- Teachers' checks have shown that pupils' reading comprehension is an area that requires extra work. Consequently, you have changed the way that you teach whole-class reading and reviewed the choice of texts. Phonics checks have shown that children in the Reception class and pupils in Years 1 and 2 have gaps in their phonic knowledge. You have made changes to the delivery of the phonics curriculum in these year groups.
- In mathematics, teachers' checks have identified gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding in all areas. Consequently, teachers have adapted the way that they organise mathematics lessons. Pupils revisit basic mathematical skills at the start of every day.

- Subjects such as geography and art are now blocked for two-week periods across the term. The aim is to deepen pupils' knowledge in these subjects.
- Currently, individual pupils who are unable to attend school because they are displaying COVID-19 symptoms are set work through the school website. In the future, you plan to use an online platform to deliver remote learning if year-group 'bubbles' or individual pupils are sent home.

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 board of trustees, the director of education for the diocese of Lichfield, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Staffordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Wayne Simner  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**