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23 November 2020

Lindsey Vollans  
Executive Headteacher  
St Michael's C of E Primary School  
Front Street  
Bishop Middleham  
County Durham  
DL17 9AL

Dear Mrs Vollans

### **Ofsted visit to St Michael's C of E Primary School**

Following my visit with Malcolm Kirtley, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 22 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 head of school and 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 7 September 2020. Pupils are expected to attend full time.
- Pupils' attendance so far this term is in line with that normally seen at this time of year.
- All pupils are studying the full range of subjects that make up your usual curriculum. Teachers have checked what curriculum content pupils know and remember. You explained how teachers are using this information to plan pupils' learning this term.
- The time spent on different subjects has been changed to prioritise literacy and mathematics. You are teaching additional phonics lessons in Years 1 and 2, and more reading comprehension throughout the school.
- You have made some changes to when parts of the curriculum are taught. For example, in history you will revisit the topic of the First World War later this term.
- Leaders have set up online learning so that teachers can deliver education remotely, should they need to do so as a result of COVID-19 restrictions.

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

Yours sincerely

Carl Sugden  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**