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Mrs C Scott  
Headteacher  
Seven Hills School  
Granville Road  
Sheffield  
South Yorkshire  
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Dear Mrs Scott

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Seven Hills School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 29 November 2011, for the time you gave to our telephone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please extend my thanks to the governors and local authority representatives for the discussions we had, and a special thank you to the students I met.

Seven Hills moved to its new site at start of the current school year and is now co-located with All Saints Catholic High School. During the past year, there have been a number of changes to staffing. Three teachers have left and have been replaced by one full-time teacher and three members of staff on the graduate teacher programme. Three teaching assistants have been appointed. The leadership team has been restructured and staff roles have been clarified.

As a result of the inspection on 7 July 2010, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made outstanding progress in making improvements, and outstanding progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Following the previous inspection robust systems were put into place to ensure consistency of practice on both sites, particularly with regard to safety and the safeguarding of students. This ensured common practice. An exceptionally well thought-out transition programme enabled the move to the new building to go smoothly, ensuring that students settled quickly, and addressing the very real concerns of their parents and carers.

In a short time, leaders have successfully created a school that is cohesive, harmonious and embraces all learners, enabling those of all abilities to make progress. First-rate training has

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brought about a change in the culture of the school. Staff from different backgrounds now have a better understanding of teaching students with a wide range of needs. Attainment is low because of students' special educational needs and/or disabilities, but adults' high expectations of students are accelerating their progress at a very good rate. The monitoring of classroom practice and the tracking of students' progress has enabled challenging targets to be set for all abilities, and is quickly reducing any gaps in their learning. The meticulous analysis of data is being used to improve the curriculum. For example, on recognising that fewer students in Key Stage 4 were making better than expected progress in English and mathematics compared to other Key Stages, the timetable was changed to include additional lessons to remedy this. The results of assessment are now taken into account by teachers in planning lessons that build on previous learning as well as being linked to individual education plans.

The curriculum has been overhauled to ensure it is relevant, meaningful, and tailored to individual needs. The new accommodation and high-quality resources allow students with more profound and complex needs to progress in a way that meets the style in which they learn most effectively. A wider range of pertinent, nationally-recognised courses furthers the achievement of older students. Vocational courses leading to accreditation in, for example, the construction industry or catering open up life possibilities. Considerable links have already been forged with the co-located school for lessons and use of free time. Higher-attaining students have embarked on GCSE courses and the High Schools resources are used to extend the curriculum to include music, and support for Spanish. In addition, staff from Seven Hills have provided training for High School staff in the management of various medical conditions. Furthermore, a small group of High School students join a Seven Hills group for literacy support. The success of the move is paying dividends in students' personal development. Students are showing greater maturity and increased confidence. They appreciate and enjoy meeting their High School 'buddy', and are keen to earn the appropriate colour wristband that will allow them to socialise on the High School's yard. Students from both are schools are full of enthusiasm for the joint history project culminating in an enactment of the Civil War.

Very strong leadership has taken this school forward at a remarkable rate. The restructured leadership team had already been successful in making improvements prior to moving to the new building. The skill, passion and enthusiasm of leaders have provided direction and very good support to staff, parents and carers, some of whom were reluctant to make the move to a large school. Their knowledgeable, systematic approach focuses on self-review at all levels and is ensuring increasingly accurate and insightful evaluation. Leaders know what needs to be done to continue to raise achievement.

Overall, leaders have received satisfactory support from the local authority. Initially, support was minimal and dependent upon individuals. This has improved over time, particularly in drawing up of an agreed admissions policy. The school has played a considerable part in establishing working parties with the other nine special schools in the local authority.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Katharine Halifax  
Additional Inspector

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in July 2010.**

- Develop further the use of data that is collected about students' progress.
- Complete the implementation of the plans for enhancing the curriculum so that it meets students' needs more fully.
- Develop more robust quality assurance procedures to check that policies and procedures are being implemented consistently across the two sites particularly in matters related to safety and safeguarding.