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21 March 2019

Rebecca Staples  
Principal  
Dinnington High School  
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Dear Ms Staples

### **No formal designation inspection of Dinnington High School**

Following my visit with Dimitris Spiliotis, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 5 March 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, aspects of the effectiveness of leadership and management in the school (including governance) and the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils at the school.

### **Evidence**

Inspectors scrutinised the checks carried out on staff before they take up posts in the school. Inspectors also evaluated a variety of information relating to safeguarding arrangements, including records of child protection cases. An inspector considered the processes used by leaders to manage any allegations against members of staff and evaluated a sample case file. Inspectors talked with pupils, both formally and informally around the site, about how safe they feel in school. Inspectors met with the leaders who have specific responsibility for child protection. Inspectors also met with three groups of staff.

Inspectors scrutinised records of pupils' attendance and the records of fixed-term exclusions. An inspector met with the leaders responsible for attendance and

behaviour. Two meetings were held with the leaders responsible for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Inspectors met with the chief executive officer of the Learner Engagement and Achievement Partnership multi-academy trust, the executive principal, a group of governors and a trustee of the multi-academy trust.

Having considered the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Safeguarding is effective.

### **Context**

Dinnington High School has 986 pupils on roll, including 120 students in the sixth form. The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average. The number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to support for SEND is above the national average.

Since your appointment as principal in January 2017, there has been a substantial turnover of staff. Together with the trust, you have implemented two staffing restructures, which have led to many new appointments to roles at all levels of the school. Approximately 50% of teachers have left since you took up your post, including all of the senior leadership team and most of the middle leaders. Shortly before your appointment, the board of trustees was dissolved and reconstituted. The governing body was reconstituted shortly after you took up your post.

### **Inspection Findings**

While the evidence gathered in this inspection indicates that the school has not declined significantly from its level of performance as judged at the previous inspection in November 2017, leaders in the school and the trust have not done enough to ensure that it has improved significantly. Some of the areas for improvement set out in the inspection report have not been effectively addressed. Leaders need to take further, urgent action for the school to move towards being good at its next full inspection.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment remains inconsistent. At times, pupils benefit from teachers' effective planning, so that pupils' varying needs are met. This includes pupils who are disadvantaged and those with SEND. On these occasions, teachers make effective use of questions to check pupils' understanding and to challenge them in their thinking. As a result, pupils' work demonstrates a pride in their learning. Such effective practice was seen in a range of subjects and year groups. This is an inconsistent picture, however, with variability of challenge,

use of questions and pupils' pride in their work still evident across a range of subjects.

The standard of pupils' behaviour continues to be variable, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. At times, in a variety of subjects and year groups, pupils engage in off-task chatter and do not listen to the teacher. On these occasions, pupils require frequent staff intervention to get them back on track. Around school, pupils do not consistently conduct themselves with self-discipline, requiring a high level of staff presence to establish and maintain appropriate behaviour. Some pupils are still arriving late to lessons, another area for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

You have taken steps to improve pupils' outcomes by introducing several new systems. For example, teachers meet weekly to work together and to share their good practice, as a means of improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Subject leaders are more firmly held to account through regular meetings with line managers, to discuss progress information about different groups of pupils. As evidenced in the variability of teaching and pupils' behaviour across the school, however, these measures are not consistently embedded.

Leaders have taken effective action to address a number of the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection, however. For example, you have been effective in improving pupils' attendance. As a consequence of these actions, pupils' overall attendance is beginning to improve, and their persistent absence is beginning to decline. There is a particularly strengthening picture of the attendance and persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.

There is also an improving picture with regard to the use of fixed-term exclusion. Following a period in which rates of exclusions were worryingly high, especially for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, current information indicates that the rates of exclusion have fallen substantially. There is a decline in the rate of pupils with SEND being excluded and especially for disadvantaged pupils. All of the pupils and staff who spoke to inspectors told us that behaviour is improving. In part, leaders put this down to the introduction of 'restorative practice', which has led to fewer internal exclusions as well as fewer fixed-term exclusions.

Following the previous inspection, leaders carried out a review of the provision for pupils with SEND. You identified a substantial number of weaknesses in the arrangements for both identifying these pupils accurately and for supporting them appropriately. This led to some major changes in the leadership of SEND and in the organisation of roles within the SEND team. As a result, systems are now in place for the accurate identification and support of pupils with SEND. The leaders with responsibility for SEND have got a firm grip on the school's provision for these pupils. At the point of this inspection, there were some early signs of the effectiveness of leaders' new systems. However, because these changes are so recent, it is not possible to fully evaluate their effectiveness at this stage.

You, other leaders and staff take your safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. Consequently, there is a strong culture of safeguarding permeating the school. You have ensured that staff are up to date in the necessary training for safeguarding pupils, such as the signs of abuse to look out for, the danger signs of radicalisation and extremism and the threats of child sexual exploitation. Staff are clear on what processes must be followed in the event that they become worried about a pupil. Staff are also clear on their statutory responsibility to report any concerns about fellow members of staff should any arise and how to do this. You have a secure and demonstrable understanding of how to manage any such allegations against members of staff, including the necessity of communicating with the designated officer for child protection.

All of the pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they feel safe in school. They told us that bullying sometimes happens, but that they all know a trusted adult they could tell and that the problem would be sorted out effectively. Pupils could also tell us about how they have been taught to keep themselves safe, especially online and about knives and drugs. Some pupils, who spoke to inspectors, are aware of the risks of radicalisation and extremism, but some are not so sure.

### **External support**

The school is in receipt of support from within the multi-academy trust. Principally, the support is to add capacity to the senior leadership team and to the leadership of SEND. While this support has been effective to some extent, you and the trust leaders recognise that there is much more to be done and quickly.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Further improve pupils' attendance and reduce persistent absence.
- Further improve standards of pupils' behaviour.
- Increase the amount of good-quality teaching, learning and assessment.
- Ensure that all pupils have a clear understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.
- Fully embed the recent improvements to the provision of SEND support.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Rotherham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Steve Shaw  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

