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18 December 2020

Gemma Dixon  
Headteacher  
Forest Moor School  
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North Yorkshire  
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Dear Ms Dixon

### **Ofsted remote visit to Forest Moor School**

Following my remote visit with Sarah Hubbard, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 1 December 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 in your roles as headteacher and designated safeguarding leader. We also spoke to the director of education quality. 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:**

- Approximately 70% of pupils have had to self-isolate since the start of term. The 'bubble' consisting of 15 pupils in Years 10 and 11 has had to isolate twice. Additionally, 11 members of staff have been in self-isolation at least once since the start of term.
- Pupils are studying their usual range of subjects. However, there has been some disruption to the curriculum due to staff absence. For example, there was a period of time when pupils were unable to participate in outdoor educational activities.
- Following a return to full-time education in September, you told us that teachers' first priority in this specialist setting was to help pupils re-engage with their learning. To do this, staff focused on helping pupils to improve their behaviour in the classroom and around the school site.
- Teachers' checks on pupils' new starting points highlight that, since returning to school in September, some pupils in Years 5 and 6 require additional support with their reading and phonic knowledge. In the upper school, pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 are finding it difficult to write at length in their English

lessons. You told us that pupils' writing was stronger prior to the period when schools were only open to some pupils due to COVID-19 restrictions.

- In mathematics, Years' 10 and 11 assessment results show that pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding of geometry are not as strong as they used to be. Teachers are working with pupils to clarify and correct misconceptions relating to Pythagoras's theorem.
- You told us that in some subjects, such as mathematics and science, it might not be possible to teach Year 11 pupils the full curriculum content prior to their examinations in the summer. This is due, in part, to missed learning when schools were mostly closed due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- Pupils who are absent from school are provided with written work packs to complete. This is in addition to the work set for most pupils, using the school's digital resources and software. Pupils who are absent from school speak with their class teaching assistant and/or subject teachers each day to discuss their learning and welfare. You told us that you plan to use some of the COVID-19 catch-up funding to purchase additional laptops for pupils to use when they are learning from 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 governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for North Yorkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lee Elliott  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**