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25 February 2021

Jane Hadlow  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Hadlow

### **Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Conisborough College**

Following my remote inspection with Lucy Bruce, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 27 to 28 January 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken to provide education to all pupils during the current circumstances.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 (2) of the Education Act 2005 (as amended) and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for visiting schools while routine inspections remain temporarily suspended. It was additional to the usual monitoring process for schools that are judged to require improvement.

Following changes to government guidance and the imposition of COVID-19 (coronavirus) lockdown restrictions, this monitoring inspection was carried out remotely. As such, the range of evidence available to inspectors was narrower than would normally be the case during an on-site inspection. As a result, this letter provides a more limited level of assurance than our usual monitoring reports.

The inspection took place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in May 2018.

Having considered all the evidence and taking into account the impact of COVID-19 on the school, I am of the opinion that at this time:

**Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action to provide education in the current circumstances.**

## Context

- Since your appointment in September 2018, there have been changes to the leadership team. This includes internal promotions and an external appointment. Five new subject leaders have been appointed, including the special educational needs coordinator. There are four new governors.
- In the autumn term 2020, all pupils experienced remote education because of COVID-19. This affected approximately a quarter of the pupils at any one time. Year 11 pupils had two periods of remote education.
- Nearly all pupils are learning remotely. Most of the pupils who are attending school are vulnerable or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- At the time of this inspection, a small proportion of staff were absent due to COVID-19. The school was affected by high levels of staff absence before Christmas. Staff absence is managed through the arrangements for remote education.

## Main findings

- You and your staff are taking strong action to ensure that pupils continue to receive a broad education in the current circumstances. You have focused on adapting the curriculum and supporting staff to teach remotely and ensure pupils' well-being.
- Leadership is dynamic and thoughtful. Before the start of the pandemic, you had already made significant improvements. Higher expectations for behaviour have been consolidated. Staff and pupils said that behaviour is much better. The number of pupils excluded from school has reduced significantly.
- Your decision to develop the potential of existing staff through well-aimed training is making a significant difference. Staff new to the school bring fresh ideas. The cumulative effect of this work is clear. You, your leadership team and subject leaders are driving improvements, especially to the curriculum and pupils' learning.
- The work to improve how well subjects are taught is bearing fruit. Subject leaders are reviewing the content of their subjects to check that it is well sequenced. Leaders support subject leaders to adapt their teaching plans for remote education. The content of subjects has been reordered with the aim of helping pupils to learn at home. For example, in English, pupils study non-fiction instead of novels. Teachers understand that pupils need to revisit key knowledge so that they can remember it. This is evident in remote lessons, which start with a recap of previous work.

- Leaders routinely check pupils' work. Leaders and teachers are refining these checks so that the information they get can be used quickly to adapt their plans. Making sure that assessment is used effectively to check whether pupils know more and remember more is a priority.
- Leaders take effective action to ensure that all pupils can continue to access a broad and relevant curriculum during the current restrictions. The bespoke programme of support for pupils with SEND is based on their individual needs. This mirrors the in-school programme. Leaders work in close partnership with external agencies to meet the needs of these pupils. For example, the speech and language service continues to support pupils.
- Leaders encourage vulnerable pupils to attend school in person. Where vulnerable pupils work from home, there is regular contact. Heads of year support subject teachers to make sure that all pupils attend lessons, including remotely. This is supported by remote assemblies, which follow the normal timetable. These celebrate pupils' successes and allow them regular contact with teachers and their peers. Weaker readers are a priority. Teaching assistants continue to provide literacy support both in school and remotely.
- Leaders are ambitious for Year 11. Pupils follow a clear timetable so that they can access all their subjects. They receive helpful feedback from their teachers whether they are at home or in school. Pupils know that their teachers are there to support them. Attendance in Year 11 remote lessons is strong.
- Governors understand the school's priorities and know what needs to be done. They receive helpful information about the school's performance, and staff and pupil well-being. They support you and your staff, and hold you to account, in equal measure. Governors bring considerable expertise and are starting to adopt a more strategic role. Their focus is on getting the best out of the current situation but with an eye to the future.
- The local authority provides targeted support. This has a positive impact, especially on the ability of leaders to drive improvement. Subject leaders are part of a local authority project to develop and share ideas on remote education with other schools.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff and pupils to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during the current circumstances. They also spoke to members of the governing body and representatives of the local authority. Inspectors visited some remote lessons and looked at pupils' work in English.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for the London Borough of Lewisham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Brian Oppenheim  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**