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18 March 2021

Rebecca Staples  
Principal  
Dinnington High School  
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South Yorkshire  
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Dear Ms Staples

### **Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Dinnington High School**

Following my remote inspection with Graham Findlay, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 24 February 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.

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 February 2020.

Having considered all the evidence and taking into account the impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus) 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.**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should take further action to:

- ensure that the quality of the curriculum planning improves, particularly in key stage 3 and for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)
- ensure that all pupils are given the support they need to be able to read as well as they should.

### **Context**

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have undertaken a staffing restructure. 17 members of staff have left the school. 10 members of staff have joined the school. A new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has been appointed, as well as a curriculum leader for business and information technology. Five new governors have joined the local governing body.
- Across the autumn term 2020, more than half of all pupils had at least one period of self-isolation due to COVID-19 and were educated remotely. The most heavily affected group was Year 9.
- At the time of this inspection, most pupils were receiving their education remotely. A small number of pupils, including vulnerable pupils and pupils with education, health and care plans, were attending school on site.

### **Main findings**

- Leaders acted decisively to make certain that pupils can receive an education in the current circumstances. They have made sure that all pupils can access their learning remotely using an appropriate device. Pupils enjoy the full range of blended learning opportunities offered. This includes live lessons delivered by teachers.
- The number of pupils who engage regularly with remote education has increased since the start of this lockdown period. Teachers are keen to enthuse pupils. Leaders have provided teachers with training in how pupils can learn remotely. Teachers have found inventive ways to check pupils' knowledge and understanding, for example by using virtual whiteboards so that pupils can quickly solve mathematics problems. Teachers are creative in the ways they support pupils to remember key information. Some activities used by teachers are not accessed easily by pupils with SEND, without support from adults.
- Leaders have improved curriculum leadership, including appointing more subject specialists. Curriculum leaders have reviewed their plans to identify the key content that pupils need to learn and in what order. In English, for instance, leaders have made sure that pupils build upon their prior knowledge. They are ambitious for pupils to enter the 'exciting world of

language and literature'. Curriculum planning is not as advanced in all subjects. Planning in some subjects is weaker in key stage 3 than in key stages 4 and 5. This means that some pupils lack the necessary knowledge in some subjects to move to the next stage.

- Leaders have identified improving pupils' reading abilities as a key priority. They are keen 'to break down the culture' of 'I cannot read'. Leaders identify pupils who need reading support when they join the school. A more focused reading support programme is needed so that weaker readers, including older pupils, can read well.
- Many pupils in Years 11 and 13 have been particularly affected by recent circumstances. They have received ongoing help and support. This includes careers information, advice and guidance to encourage pupils' ambition for the future. Pastoral support for these pupils is effective.
- Some vulnerable pupils and pupils with SEND learn on the school site. Many pupils thrive because of the pastoral care they receive from staff. Pupils studying on site follow the same curriculum as those learning remotely. However, leaders have not ensured that the curriculum is adapted to meet these pupils' needs in all subjects.
- The new SENCo is receiving effective support from senior leaders to improve this aspect of the school's work. Leaders and staff are in regular contact with the pupils with SEND who are studying from home. They provide bespoke support to these pupils and their families. Parents who responded to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, said they appreciate this support. Since the previous inspection, more pupils with SEND experience a broader curriculum than they did before. However, the curriculum in some subjects does not address their learning needs well enough.
- Governance has improved since the previous inspection. Five new governors have joined the local governing body. The scheme of delegation has been re-written. The roles and responsibilities of governors are now much clearer. Governors are aware that they need to be more focused on the actions required to improve the quality of education for pupils.
- The support from within the trust has improved markedly since the previous inspection. Lines of accountability are much clearer. The quality of challenge and support is better. One member of the trust told inspectors, 'We have moved mountains. We have stripped back to focus on what matters. We need to make sure pupils leave the school able to contribute to the world of work or education. We need to build their confidence for their future'.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, senior leaders and curriculum leaders, members of the local governing body, the chief executive officer,

the chair of the trust board and a trustee to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also spoke with teaching staff and heard pupils read. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 66 free-text responses, and 72 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chief executive officer of the Learner Engagement and Achievement 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

Jayne Ashman  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**