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28 April 2021

Dino Di Salvo  
Principal  
Kettering Buccleuch Academy  
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Northamptonshire  
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Dear Mr Di Salvo

### **Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Kettering Buccleuch Academy**

Following my remote inspection with Rachel Tordoff, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 16 March 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 January 2018.

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:

- implement existing plans to ensure that the design and technology curriculum for pupils in key stage 3 matches the breadth and depth of the national curriculum.

### **Context**

- Since the school's previous section 5 inspection, there have been considerable changes in staffing. You have appointed two senior staff, one in the primary and one in the secondary phase. You have appointed new heads of department for the following subjects: sociology, music and art. There have been internal promotions to the posts of head of department for mathematics, science, English, physical education, ICT and geography. Four members of the local governing body have resigned and been replaced.
- In the spring term 2020, when the school was closed to most pupils, almost all pupils were educated at home. Just over half of the pupils which the school identified as vulnerable were attending school on site. Approximately one third of pupils with an education, health and care plan were attending school on site.
- At the time of this inspection, most pupils were attending school on site. A very small number of pupils had not returned to school and were continuing their education remotely.

### **Main findings**

- Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking the necessary actions to provide education in the current circumstances. Prior to the current national lockdown, leaders had ensured that the content of the school's usual curriculum continued to be delivered. Staff quickly adapted their teaching methods and lesson activities to meet the challenges of delivering the curriculum remotely. Pupils in Years 11 and 13 are on track to have completed their courses by the school's usual timelines. Leaders keep parents up to date with developments, for example through the well-attended virtual 'town hall' information evenings.
- A small number of pupils continue to receive their education remotely. Pupils follow the same timetable of subjects as pupils in school. They study the same curriculum content, using a range of digital and paper-based resources. The school's subject guides provide valuable support for pupils who are working remotely.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is ambitious in most subjects. For example, in English pupils study a range of challenging texts from different genres and periods. However, the design and technology curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 9 does not cover the full breadth of the national curriculum.

Pupils in the primary phase experience the full range of the subject. Leaders have introduced a wider range of GCSE options in design and technology than was available previously. Plans are in place to develop the curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 9 from September 2021 by introducing textiles. Leaders are developing plans to extend the range of subjects within design and technology further.

- Following the last inspection, subject leaders from the primary and secondary phases worked together to design a curriculum that builds from the early years through to key stage 5. Detailed curriculum plans for each subject set out what pupils should learn and when. Plans are logically sequenced. They identify the important content that pupils need to build their knowledge. They include opportunities for pupils to revisit content so that they know and remember more over time.
- Teachers use a range of assessment methods to identify the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn for future learning. For example, teachers use short-answer assessments to check that pupils have the individual pieces of knowledge which they need to understand a bigger concept. Teachers use these assessments to plan their future lessons.
- At the time of the last inspection, leaders had introduced a new approach to the teaching of reading. A consistent approach has now been implemented across the school. Teachers are well trained to deliver the school's phonics programme. Pupils who need extra help receive additional support by trained staff. Leaders promote a love of reading across the school. An inspector listened to primary-aged pupils reading with enthusiasm and enjoyment. Regular reading activities in the secondary phase encourage pupils to read a range of texts across the curriculum.
- Leaders are ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Most pupils with SEND follow the same curriculum as other pupils. Teachers provide additional support to help pupils achieve the school's curriculum aims. Most parents of pupils with SEND who made their views known feel that their children are supported well. Leaders continually review the provision for pupils with SEND to ensure that all pupils' needs are met.
- Those responsible for governance hold leaders to account well. They have high expectations and support and challenge leaders to meet these. The trust's mantra of 'keep up, not catch-up' is clear in the school's approach to delivering the curriculum in the current circumstances.
- The trust has provided effective support and challenge to improve the school's curriculum. Trust subject advisers are in place for most subjects. They have worked with school subject leaders to develop ambitious

curriculum plans. Leaders value the support they have received from the trust in all aspects of their work.

### **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, two of the trust's regional directors, subject leaders and the two special educational needs coordinators to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 152 free-text responses, and 119 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the United Learning Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Northamptonshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Deborah Mosley  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**