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11 February 2014

Mrs K Sparling Headteacher Oldfield School Kelston Road Bath BA1 9AB

Dear Mrs Sparling

## No formal designation monitoring inspection of Oldfield School

Following my visit with Karl Sampson, Her Majesty's Inspector and Ian Hancock, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your academy on 11-13 December 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because the Chief Inspector was concerned about the number of complaints and allegations made to Ofsted about the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements at the school.

#### **Evidence**

Inspectors examined the school's single central record and a wide range of other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. They met with the headteacher and other senior leaders including heads of faculties, members of the governing body, and groups of students.

In addition, inspectors scrutinised the school's self-evaluation and development plan, minutes of meetings and records relating to the monitoring of teaching, behaviour and safety. By the end of the monitoring inspection, five responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) had been submitted. The low number of responses was not sufficient for inspectors to take into account. Inspectors did take account of a recent parental survey conducted by the school. They also analysed 53 responses to the staff questionnaire and considered 11 written or emailed submissions from serving staff. Beyond meetings with senior leaders noted above, a further 14 staff requested individual meetings or telephone calls with inspectors.

During the monitoring inspection, inspectors observed nine lessons, seven of which were joint observations carried out with members of the school's senior leadership team. Inspectors also conducted short visits to a series of lessons to observe students' behaviour and learning.

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

The school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

### **Context**

Oldfield School is a smaller-than-average-sized secondary school. There are currently 775 students on roll. The large majority of students are of White British heritage. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is broadly average. The proportion speaking English as an additional language is below average. The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is below average. This is additional government funding to support students known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and students with a parent or carer in the armed forces. The proportion of school action pupils, those supported by school action plus or who have a statement of special educational need is well below average.

Oldfield School converted to become a co-educational academy in February 2011. There are currently male students in Year 7, Year 8 and in the sixth form. In 2012, the school met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress. Students are not entered early for GCSE examinations in mathematics. The number of students changing school during the year is in line with average figures.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Students are very polite and courteous around the school site. They almost always conduct themselves well during the day, including at lunch and break times. Where high quality teaching challenges students, they show outstanding attitudes to learning. Relationships across the school are strong. Students show respect to their teachers and want to listen to and learn from them, which contributes positively to students often making outstanding progress. During the inspection, a very small amount of poor behaviour was observed. This occurred at the end of the school day and when teaching did not meet students' individual needs.

The school's safeguarding procedures meet requirements. Through curriculum opportunities and assemblies, students have a good awareness of different types of bullying and how to keep themselves safe. Students research current topical issues and present findings to their peers. For example, a group of students recently made a film about human trafficking. They presented it during an assembly which raised

students' awareness of the issue and also gave the students guidance on how to protect themselves from it.

Attendance rates are above the national picture and the number of students who are persistently absent from school has decreased in recent years. There is not, though, a system to routinely follow up absence for all students. The school does not conduct any analysis of behaviour incidents to identify patterns and trends. Therefore, it does not adapt its practice and provision to try to prevent any recurrence of behaviour incidents.

Although the school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements, the single central record contains administrative errors and is not routinely maintained so as to ensure that vetting procedures are implemented rigorously. The governing body has not ensured that statutory training undertaken by the designated officer for child protection has been refreshed in a timely manner.

The school's governing body has too little understanding of its statutory responsibilities. Its members are over reliant on information provided by the headteacher and it does not ensure that complaints, grievance and whistleblowing procedures are sufficiently robust to enable stakeholders to have confidence that their concerns will be handled in proper manner.

# **External support**

The school's designated officer for child protection has made suitable links with external agencies to ensure that concerns regarding individual pupils can be referred appropriately.

# **Priorities for further improvement**

- Improve the quality of leadership and management in the school by ensuring that:
  - policies and procedures surrounding complaints, grievance and whistleblowing are fit for purpose, reflect good governance and are implemented correctly, impartially and confidentially
  - the school's single central record is maintained accurately and checked rigorously to ensure it meets requirements consistently
  - the governing body has a clear understanding of the school's performance and is able to hold the senior leaders robustly to account for their work, including monitoring how well all school policies are being applied.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken, in conjunction with the Department for Education, in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

During this inspection, Ofsted received a number of complaints from staff and from the local authority which lie outside its remit. The issues underpinning these complaints have been passed to the Department for Education for further consideration.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Bath and North East Somerset, to the Secretary of State for Education, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department for Education. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Simon Rowe **Her Majesty's Inspector** 

cc Chair of the Governing Body