

Serco Inspections  
Colmore Plaza  
20 Colmore Circus Queensway  
Birmingham  
B4 6AT

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T:** 0121 6799163  
**Direct E:** lewis.mackie1@serco.com



12 May 2014

Ms Christine Quinn  
Executive Principal  
Ninestiles School – An Academy  
Hartfield Crescent  
Acocks Green  
Birmingham  
West Midland  
B27 7QG

Dear Ms Quinn

### **No formal designation monitoring inspection of Ninestiles School – an Academy**

Following my visit with Joanne Harvey, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 7-8 April 2014, 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 the no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out following a request from the Secretary of State.

### **Evidence**

Her Majesty's Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents and policies relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. A number of individual personnel files and child protection files were examined. Meetings were held with the Executive Principal and the Principal, members of the senior leadership team and groups of staff, including teachers, support staff and office staff. Her Majesty's Inspectors talked to two groups of students and met with representatives from the local authority and the police. A meeting was also held with two members of the Board of Trustees. Her Majesty's Inspectors spoke to a small number of parents informally as they dropped their children at school. Additionally, the 80 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff were considered. Her Majesty's Inspectors toured the school with the Executive Principal and the Principal and made a series of short visits to lessons. They also scrutinised minutes of trustee meetings, examples of reports provided to directors and trustees, and a range of curriculum documents.

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

**The school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.**

**The quality of leadership and management is outstanding.**

### **Context**

The academy is larger than the average-sized secondary school with approximately 1350 students on roll. Around two-thirds of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and many of these speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students for whom the school receives the pupil premium is well above average. This is additional funding for children in local authority care, those with a parent in the armed services and for those known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported through school action is similar to most other schools. However, the proportion of students requiring a higher level of support at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

A purposeful and positive atmosphere permeates the academy. Relationships amongst students and between staff and students are consistently strong. Students of all ages are unanimous in articulating that behaviour in the academy is typically good. All members of the community treat each other politely and respectfully. The academy has clear expectations of how students should behave. For example, the academy day operates without bells and there is an expectation that students and staff will be at the right place at the right time. Students state that they feel safe and are well prepared to keep themselves safe outside of academy. Students know about different kinds of bullying, including e-bullying, racial and homophobic bullying. Moreover, students have a developed awareness of tensions that might arise between groups who hold different beliefs from one another. In the words of one Year 10 student: 'Everyone learns to embrace each other's differences. We learn about beliefs and points of view and we really think about them.'

In lessons, students work with a sense of purpose. They understand that the harder they work the more they will achieve and that this, in turn, will pay dividends as they move to the next stage in their education.

### **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

Rigorous arrangements are in place to safeguard students. Checks on the suitability of staff to work with students are up-to-date and meticulously recorded. The academy's safeguarding and child protection policies provide staff with general information about what they need to know and what to do if they have concerns. The policy identifies specific aspects of child protection that may have particular

relevance in this academy and community. It signals where further information can be found on subjects such as forced marriage and female genital mutilation. All staff undertake regular training in child protection and extensive additional training has been provided for those staff in mentoring or counselling roles. Some staff are trained in restraint techniques but there has been no cause to use physical intervention over a protracted period. Assembly themes increase adults' and students' awareness and understanding of risks and also explore challenging issues such as sexual exploitation. Arrangements to ensure that newly qualified teachers, student teachers, new staff and visitors are fully aware of the academy's safeguarding policy are comprehensive. Without exception, every single student knows the access point for help, including for minor matters such as forgotten lunch money as well as more serious requests for support.

A culture of inclusion, equal opportunity and individual responsibility is at the core of this academy, which helps promote community cohesion. Subjects such as religious education, citizenship, sex and relationships education, social, moral, spiritual and cultural education, philosophy and ethics, law, music, dance and drama, as well as the school's unique 'Aspire' curriculum, ensure that students are exposed to diverse cultures, beliefs and traditions. Small tutor groups provide a safe environment in which students can discuss controversial subjects. Visits, such as the recent trip to the Houses of Parliament, further enhance student's understanding of British democratic society. The school's commitment to providing all students with a broad curriculum is unequivocal and well understood. In selecting this school, parents are asked to 'sign-up' to an agreement that their child will take a full part in all learning opportunities.

The senior leadership team show clear commitment to the academy's vision and mission statement and act as role models for the academy community. Senior leaders, particularly the Executive Principal and a member of the Board of Trustees, are deeply knowledgeable about both the make-up of the local community and the risk of radicalisation and extremism. Governance arrangements are structured so as to ensure protection from any planned 'infiltration' or inappropriate influence by specific interest groups. Both the Executive Principal and the member of the Board of Trustees have made public statements speaking out against extremism and, over time, have reported their concerns to the local authority, elected members and prominent politicians. The senior leader with responsibility for safeguarding has recently attended training on radicalisation and extremism. A training event for staff, trustees and directors is taking place within the next few weeks to ensure that the importance of this specific agenda is even more widely understood. Middle leaders, staff newer to the profession, support staff, students and those with responsibility for governance have a clear understanding of how a relentless drive to improve standards can simultaneously ensure that students develop as well-rounded British citizens.

Trustees and academy councillors take their responsibilities for monitoring finances and checking on the quality of teaching and students' learning seriously. Minutes of meetings demonstrate rigour and challenge in their monitoring arrangements. The

academy director with responsibility for ensuring the arrangements for safeguarding knows what systems and procedures are in place as well as the efficacy of these. Notably, within this diverse school community there has been not one recorded incident of racial abuse in excess of a year. Trustees, directors and councillors are well trained, well informed and bring an exceptional level of intelligence and relevant knowledge to their roles.

### **External support**

Senior staff, trustees and councillors make use of resources and support available through the police to manage individual incidents and to address the risk of extremism in school. The academy works positively with the local authority, for example in delivering a range of support and school improvement advice to other schools in the area. The local authority representative was unaware that concerns around radicalisation and extremism had been raised by the school.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Birmingham, to the Secretary of State for Education, the Academies Advisers Unit and the Chair of the Board of Trustees. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Hilary Macdonald  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

cc The Board of Trustees