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24 June 2015

Mr Daran Bland  
The Acting Headteacher  
The John Fielding Community Special School  
Ashlawn Drive  
Boston  
Lincolnshire  
PE21 9PX

Dear Mr Bland

### **No formal designation monitoring inspection of The John Fielding Community Special School**

Following my visit to your school on 23 June 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and aspects of the quality of leadership and management at the school.

### **Evidence**

I scrutinised the single central record, documents relating to child protection arrangements, records of checks regarding the safety of the school site and records related to how the school recruits members of staff since April 2015. I scrutinised the report of a local authority investigation that was conducted in April 2015 and focused upon safeguarding arrangements. I looked at the school's website, minutes of governors' meetings and the support plan for the school.

I met with you, the acting head of school, the assistant headteacher, the Chair of Governors and a National Leader of Education who is supporting the school. I had separate meetings with two teachers and two teaching assistants. You and I jointly observed pupils arriving at school and we visited each classroom to see pupils and staff at work. I observed the behaviour of pupils at morning break time and lunchtime when I was able to speak with a number of staff and pupils.

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

The schools' safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

## **Context**

The John Fielding Community Special School is a small school catering for pupils from two to 19 years of age who have special educational needs.

You are currently the executive headteacher of The Spalding Special Schools Federation. The previous headteacher of The John Fielding Community Special School left her job at Easter 2015. The governing body was unsuccessful in appointing a new headteacher and you started as acting headteacher on the 13 April 2015. You work at The John Fielding Community Special School for between two and three days per week.

A National Leader of Education from the Grantham Additional Needs Fellowship started supporting the school on 1 June 2015 for between half a day and one day per week. An assistant headteacher from The Lady Jane Franklin School started working at The John Fielding Community Special School as acting head of school on 1 June 2015 for three days per week.

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

Since starting work at the school you, the National Leader of Education and the acting head of school have all quickly gained the confidence of the staff team. Members of staff told me that they are 'excited' about the future of the school, that they 'feel supported' and that 'morale has gone through the roof'. You, the staff and pupils create a welcoming environment for visitors, but the school website does not have enough useful information on it for parents and pupils.

You have acted quickly to make sure that pupils benefit from better resources in classrooms and that the space around school is used more effectively. This means that staff have the opportunity to deliver higher quality lessons and that incidents of poor pupil behaviour are reducing. All staff have access to British Institute of Learning Disabilities accredited behaviour management training, which includes the use of physical intervention. Any gaps in staff training have been identified and are being addressed. It is becoming increasingly rare that pupils require physical intervention by staff in order to help them manage their behaviour. Positive behaviour plans are in place for those pupils who need them.

You acted without hesitation to review the school's safeguarding policy and to satisfy yourself that all of the necessary checks on staff suitability had been completed. All of the school's policies would benefit from a review now that there are different leaders in post. You, the acting head of school and the assistant headteacher have all completed appropriate training in how to manage concerns about child protection and safeguarding. Representatives of the staff told me that they know you and

school leaders will act promptly upon any concerns that they raise about the safety of pupils.

Since arriving at the school you have worked effectively with the school business manager to develop a budget which better meets the needs of the pupils and includes a clear plan for the recruitment of staff over the coming months.

You ensure that procedures to manage pupils' medication are sound. There are systems to check that pupils are administered the correct medication at the right time. Staff have training in order for them to use the emergency medication that some pupils may need.

Risk assessments are carried out appropriately for individual pupils and activities to help keep pupils safe. The health and safety of the site are taken seriously and the necessary checks are done by the caretaker, including emergency lighting and water tests. Fire alarm tests are done weekly and a recent fire evacuation drill was conducted successfully. All off-site visits are risk assessed and staff often undertake visits to locations prior to taking the pupils there in order to ensure all aspects of safety can be considered.

The Chair of Governors, who is a parent governor, demonstrates considerable passion for the school. Now that the leadership of the school is more stable, she acknowledges that governors can step back from involvement in the day-to-day running of the school and focus on holding you and school leaders to account, ensuring that governors' activities to check on pupil safety happen more regularly and securing further improvements of the school.

### **External support**

The local authority provides the school with a school improvement adviser, and has conducted its own investigation into concerns about leadership of the school and pupil safety. The local authority supported governors to recruit and appoint the acting headteacher.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Review all policies related to pupil safety to ensure they reflect the current leadership systems and structures.
- Ensure that governors' activities to check on the safety of pupils happen more regularly and the outcomes are reported to the full governing body.
- Ensure the school website is compliant.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Lincolnshire County Council, the Secretary of State for Education and the Chair of the Governing Body. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Phil Harrison

**Her Majesty's Inspector**