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29 February 2016

Ms R Davies  
Oakfield School  
Hopewell Road  
Hull  
HU9 4HD

Dear Ms Davies

### **No formal designation monitoring inspection of Oakfield School**

Following my visit to your school on 11 February 2016, 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 behaviour at the school.

### **Evidence**

Inspectors considered evidence that included:

- observations of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in lessons
- observations of pupils' behaviour throughout the day, including discussion with pupils
- documentary evidence
- discussions with school leaders and staff.

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

Leaders and managers continue to take effective action to maintain the standards of behaviour and attitudes identified at the school's previous inspection.

### **Context**

Oakfield is a residential special school for pupils aged 11 to 16 who have social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have statements of special educational needs or education, health and care plans. Currently, 51 pupils are on roll, of whom 24 reside in accommodation on the school site from Monday to Thursday. Pupils join the school from mainstream and pupil referral units in Hull and the surrounding area. Since the last inspection in December 2014, pupils admitted

to the school have more complex behavioural needs and a high proportion are excluded, including 21 pupils who transferred to the school from a special school in Hull in 2013. The school's residential provision was inspected by a social care inspector on 8–10 February and the findings are published separately by Ofsted. A lower than average proportion of pupils are of minority ethnic heritage. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium, the government's additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care, is high, and is over three times the national average.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

Actions taken by senior leaders continue to secure consistent management of behaviour, high expectations and the strong relationships identified at the time of the last inspection in December 2014. Typically, the school is calm, and purposeful work takes place in the wide range of well-equipped specialist areas and classrooms. Pupils are safe and well supervised. They walk sensibly around corridors and follow the instructions of teachers and support staff. They generally adhere to the school's insistence that they participate in lessons and the functional rules that limit the use of mobile phones. Most pupils meet the high expectations of personal conduct and language. Discussions between pupils, and between pupils and staff, are respectful and friendly.

Behaviour is consistently well managed on entry to the school, at breaks and lunchtime. There is a strong staff presence during these times and when pupils are outside. Pupils usually arrive at school on time and in a safe and orderly manner. They are generally in positive spirits and are warmly greeted by name on their arrival. Whenever pupils are subdued, it is noted and discreet enquiry and discussion take place to support individuals.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are improving. They are clear about what is expected of them and what they are learning. Pupils say they are challenged more. Their books and portfolios of work show that they are engaging in a range of subjects. In lessons, individual support is used extensively and to good effect to support pupils' learning and understanding of specific terms and language. This support encourages and helps pupils to sustain attention. However, pupils' resilience and confidence in reading is low, with some pupils more keen to write in response to listening to adults read or watching film excerpts. The school's behaviour policy is consistently applied in lessons. Pupils' behaviour and work targets are known to teachers and success in meeting them is regularly assessed in each lesson. This contributes to earning privileges as part of the school's 'pupil pass' system. The school's approach to rewards and sanctions is clearly understood by staff and pupils. Younger pupils like the responsibility of earning points.

Routines are well established. The periodic meetings of staff and pupils during the day, known as 'hubs', are effective in reminding pupils about the standards expected, and encourage pupils to reflect on and aspire to improve and maintain positive behaviour. Pupils feel that 'hubs' have been key in helping them to improve their behaviour and their attitudes to learning. Pupils report that opportunities to meet together help them to adjust from one activity to another and are a calming influence during the day. They say, for example, 'Hubs help calm things down, give us space to get ready for lessons, especially after games at lunchtime activities. They help us to organise ourselves and get our heads together. They are a good feature and have helped a lot.'

Until very recently, the school relied upon a narrow range of sanctions and fixed-period exclusions were much higher than the national average. More alternatives have been developed over the last 12 months. Leaders record incidents meticulously and act on their interrogation of behaviour incidents to make adjustments to the school day. Internal seclusion, known throughout the school as 'first response', together with additional training and better deployment of staff, is providing much better support to pupils in crises. Staff are increasingly using techniques to assist pupils when they are anxious, upset or angry. This is helping to reduce incidents and resulting in less violent outbursts. Pupils report that behaviour is improving and they feel safe while at school.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Embed strategies to reduce further the number of behaviour incidents and exclusions.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Kingston upon Hull City Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely,

Gina White  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**