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21 October 2016

Mrs Sarah Stott & Mrs Sandra Davy  
Acting Headteachers  
Thomas Wolsey School  
Defoe Road  
Ipswich  
Suffolk  
IP1 6SG

Dear Mrs Sara Scott & Mrs Sandra Davy

### **No formal designation monitoring inspection of Thomas Wolsey School**

Following my visit to your school on 4 October 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 the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, aspects of the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, and the welfare of pupils at the school. The monitoring inspection was unannounced and was carried out in response to complaints which raised serious concerns. The inspection sought to establish whether:

- safeguarding procedures are effective
- leaders and the governing body are effective in fulfilling responsibilities with regard to safeguarding and pupils' well-being.

### **Evidence**

During my visit, I scrutinised the single central record and documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. I also met with the two acting headteachers with responsibility for child protection, the vice-chair of governors, the chair of the governors' well-being committee, and a parent. I had telephone conversations with two advisers from the local authority. I spoke to a group of

pupils and some members of staff. I observed pupils as they arrived at school, in class and around the site.

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

- safeguarding procedures are effective
- leaders and the governing body are effective in fulfilling responsibilities with regard to safeguarding and pupils' well-being.

## **Context**

Thomas Wolsey School is a day special school which converted to an academy in 2012. Many pupils have physical disabilities and the remainder have a wide range of complex needs including medical needs, sensory impairments and autism. All pupils have an education, health and care plan or statement of special educational needs. There are currently 97 pupils on roll.

The most recent Ofsted inspection of the school was in November 2014, when all aspects of the school's work were judged as outstanding. Most pupils are White British and a low proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. An above average proportion of pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding, the additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after. Some children in the Nursery and Reception Years attend on a part-time basis.

There have been recent changes in the school's leadership. The two of you were appointed as acting headteachers to cover the absence of the substantive headteacher. There have been some recent changes in staffing, and some additional supply staff are in place to back-fill the teaching roles of the two acting headteachers.

## **Safeguarding**

You have both been members of the staff team for many years and quickly established your position as acting headteachers. Staff have great confidence in your leadership. You have used your experience and shared skills to identify the correct areas for improvement and prioritise these. You, well supported by governors, are making sure that the provision for the safety of pupils is well led. You are both appointed as designated senior leaders for safeguarding. You have made sure that the arrangements for safeguarding are effective and well managed. Adults are acutely aware that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and the very recent training for staff has reinforced this. The named safeguarding governor regularly checks to make sure that these systems and procedures remain effective.

You have made sure that the most recent statutory guidance is reflected in the recently ratified policies. These policies were shared with staff in September 2016. All the required employment checks are carried out and training is up to date, including in safer recruitment practices. There is a comprehensive programme of induction and additional training for staff. This ensures that they have a detailed understanding of all aspects of safeguarding and know how to report any concerns they might have. Records of concerns are detailed and of high quality.

You and your staff team make effective use of the information you have about pupils to support your staff in keeping pupils safe. For example, information gathered by the staff during transition into the school is used well to identify those who may need additional support or care. In particular, pupils who have medical needs are supported by a plan that is designed to match their personal needs. Well-trained and skilful staff carry out high-quality personal and health care safely, maintaining the dignity of pupils at all times. The school's records show that leaders and other appropriate qualified staff act quickly to ensure that the relevant professionals and other agencies are made aware of the particular vulnerabilities of each pupil. Evidence in files demonstrates that leaders and managers work exceptionally hard to share concerns, and take part in meetings to keep pupils safe. Governors hold new leaders firmly to account with regard to safeguarding.

Pupils say they feel safe and are kept safe by staff who care for them and listen to their concerns. Those who spoke to me agree that they are happy and secure in this safe environment. The individual needs of pupils are carefully considered during activities and learning in school but also when they are involved in off-site trips. These assessments in relation to the needs of pupils and other activities are rigorous and help to keep pupils safe. Parents agree with their children that since the recent changes, they are confident in the arrangements made by leaders to keep pupils safe. One parent told me that it was good to hear laughter back in the corridors and that she no longer had concerns for the well-being or safety of her son.

### **External support**

Governors have accessed appropriate support from the local authority. This support includes improvement visits as well as finance and human resources expertise. Governors continue to use the local authority's advice to plan for the appointment of a new headteacher.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Governors need to rebuild links with the parent community and ensure that they are kept well informed of arrangements made to appoint a new headteacher.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Suffolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mary Rayner  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**