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13 December 2016

Mrs Susan Bond  
Principal  
Huntcliff School  
Redbourne Mere  
Gainsborough  
Lincolnshire  
DN21 4NN

Dear Mrs Bond

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

Following my visit to your school on 23 November 2016, with Lynn Kenworthy and Stephen Crossley, Ofsted Inspectors, 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 aspects of the effectiveness of leadership and management in the school (including governance) and the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils.

### **Evidence**

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements and met with the principal; senior and middle leaders; groups of teachers; groups of pupils; two governors, including the chair of the governing body; and a representative of the local authority. I had a discussion with the school's improvement partner.

Inspectors visited classrooms, had discussions with pupils and looked at the work in their books and folders. Inspectors also reviewed a wide range of documents relating to pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare. Inspectors considered 28 responses recorded on Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

The school is making progress in improving the effectiveness of the leadership and management of pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare.

## **Context**

Huntcliff School is a much smaller than average secondary school. There are currently 503 pupils on the school's roll. Almost all are from White British backgrounds and very few speak English as an additional language. Approximately one quarter of pupils are supported through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority). The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is much higher than the national average.

The school was inspected in June 2015 and its overall effectiveness was judged to be good. Since this inspection, Ofsted has received two complaints which raised similar concerns about the leadership and management of pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare. This inspection focused on the wider issues arising from these complaints.

## **Inspection findings**

The school's safeguarding arrangements are effective because there is a strongly embedded culture of promoting pupils' safety and welfare, and protecting pupils who may be at risk of harm. Leaders and staff act quickly and decisively when concerns are identified and they are tenacious in securing support for the most vulnerable pupils and their families.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They told inspectors that behaviour is good and pupils are almost always polite and respectful to each other. Pupils say that bullying is infrequent and, on the rare occasions it happens, it is tackled quickly and well. Some parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, do not share pupils' confidence in the school's stance on bullying.

Pupils are knowledgeable about their personal safety. Pupils know, for example, how to stay safe when using computers and the internet, mobile phones and social media. Equally, they understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and the risks associated with drugs and alcohol.

Senior leaders and governors have effective oversight of the school's safeguarding arrangements. They have ensured that checks on the suitability of staff to work in the school are complete and that school's record of these checks meets all Department for Education (DfE) requirements. In 2015–16, senior leaders and governors commissioned an external review of the school's safeguarding arrangements. This exemplifies their commitment to the safety and welfare of pupils and the school's determined drive to further improve this crucially important aspect of their work.

In general, pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and when moving between classes. Pupils respond quickly to direction from adults, for example when challenged to smarten their uniform or 'hurry up' to their next lesson. They are, in the main, polite and respectful. At breaktimes, pupils interact positively and in a mature and responsible way with minimal guidance from adults. Pupils told inspectors that they are proud of their school and, importantly, they want to do well.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning in some subjects and classes are exemplary. Pupils respond with interest and great enthusiasm when teaching is highly engaging and challenging. As a result, they make fast progress and achieve well. The behaviour and attitudes to learning of some pupils, however, are not as consistently positive. At times, teachers do not insist that all pupils comply with the school's expectations, nor do they always follow the school's system of rewards and sanctions. While pupils told inspectors that behaviour is generally good, they also highlighted this inconsistency in teachers' practice. In part, this is because senior leaders have not checked whether the school's new behaviour policy is understood by all pupils and used consistently and well by all staff. As a result, senior leaders have been too slow to provide the necessary clear guidance, additional training and robust support needed by some of their colleagues.

Senior leaders and governors have an accurate view of pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare. Senior leaders and staff work hard to identify and tackle any barriers individual pupils face. The impact of this work, especially on the most vulnerable pupils and those with the most complex needs, is clearly evident. However, some pupils and staff are not confident that the school's approach to improving pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning is working quickly or well enough. Middle leaders and staff are proud of the school's inclusive values and say that there has been improvement since September 2016. Crucially, however, some told inspectors that more needs to be done to improve the behaviour and attitudes to learning of a small group of pupils.

### **External support**

The local authority has, rightly, sought assurance that the school's safeguarding arrangements are effective and pupils' safety and welfare are promoted well. The reports they have provided include clear and helpful recommendations for leaders and governors.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should make sure that:

- all staff understand the school's behaviour policy and have the confidence, skills and effective support needed to implement the policy consistently and well

- the implementation and effectiveness of the school's behaviour policy, systems and procedures are closely monitored and, where improvement is needed, swift and decisive action is taken.

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

Yours sincerely

Nick Whittaker  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**