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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mr Chris Spruce
Executive Headteacher
Whitefriars School
Whitefriars Avenue
Wealdstone
Harrow
Middlesex
HA3 5RQ

Dear Mr Spruce

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Whitefriars School

Following my visit to your school on 14 June 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you took to discuss behaviour in your school.

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 because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 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 evaluated the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers have taken effective action to maintain the high standards of behaviour and attitudes identified at the predecessor school's previous inspections.

Context

The school converted to an academy in 2014 and is a member of the Heathland Whitefriars federation. Whitefriars is an all-through school, providing for pupils aged three to 19. The school currently has 736 pupils on roll and is smaller than the average-sized all-through school. The school expects to have 232 pupils joining it each year, and when full to capacity, there should be 1,420 pupils on roll. It currently admits pupils in early years, and key stages 1, 2 and 3. The first key stage 4 cohort will begin in September 2018. The school aims to open the sixth-form phase in September 2020. The executive headteacher works across Heathland Primary School and Whitefriars School. Most pupils transfer from both primary schools to the secondary phase.

The school serves an ethnically diverse community, and a very high proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. Most pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for additional funding is above average. The school has a below-average proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. An above-average proportion of pupils leave or join the school throughout the academic year.

The school has a stable staff and all key post-holders have been appointed. Leaders have plans in place to appoint new staff each academic year as the school expands. The school is in the process of finalising curriculum plans for key stage 4 and the sixth form. The current associate headteacher will take over the running of the school when the executive headteacher retires at the end of the current academic year. The new senior leadership team structure is organised and fully in place for the start of September 2017. The members and trustees have legal and strategic responsibilities for the schools within the federation. The stakeholders act as the local governing body and focus on the day-to-day responsibilities of the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

You and your staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work. You have worked together to create a culture in which pupils can thrive. This strong commitment to pupils comes through the ethos and sets of values that pupils defend and live by. Pupils' understanding of the school's culture led to them feeling very safe. They develop trusting relationships with each other and staff, and all get on very well together.

Partnership with parents and community groups is strong and contributes to you and your staff meeting the needs of pupils very well. You are aware of the vulnerabilities of individuals and groups and ensure that the school works closely with external agencies to provide help and support for pupils and families. You use early help extensively. For example, evidence shows that training sessions for identified parents on developing parenting skills have a direct influence on improving the attendance rates of some pupils with low attendance. You ensure that

partnership work with external services is timely, which enables pupils to remain focused on their learning. Important work with the police and local mosque, which serves the diverse community groups, is crucial in supporting the school's work to keep pupils safe. This comprehensive partnership work gives you a clear understanding of the local concerns and risks that pupils may face outside school. As a result, you have reviewed the school's behaviour policy to spell out the ultimate consequence if there is misbehaviour when pupils are in or outside school. Records show that you have not hesitated to deal swiftly with anti-social behaviour, however slight.

You and other senior leaders, including the governors, are alert to the local challenges that are likely to influence pupils as the school expands. Your vigilance has led to you placing much emphasis on working with parents and other schools before admission takes place. This early work helps your staff to identify concerns and risks quickly and put into place remedial action before pupils enter the school. For example, you make sure that staff support parents who do not understand or speak English fluently so they can access services and understand the culture and school system. Additionally, you work with a number of partners to support pupils and their families to overcome barriers such as domestic violence. The school's intervention is timely and shows a very good understanding of the barriers that a number of the pupils experience.

The school curriculum is thorough in its coverage of safeguarding topics to develop pupils' understanding of how to stay safe in or outside school. The work on using social media safely is highly effective. Organised and intensive workshops on e-safety for parents capture the voice of participants very well. Comments from parents show that they leave organised workshops better equipped to 'increase parental control and watching what their children do on the internet'. Similarly, pupils in the primary phase say that they 'learn a lot' from the sessions. You ensure that there is age-appropriate work on behaviour and safety across the curriculum, during assemblies and organised focus weeks, and when visitors or theatre groups address pupils. Pupils value this work. In spite of the wide coverage of topics on behaviour, safety and British values, pupils in key stage 3 are keen to have more personal, social and health education so they can learn more about other cultures.

Pupils are proud of their school. They are clear about rules and know the consequences 'if they cross the line'. Pupils are accountable for their behaviours and they know the different sanctions used when they fail to follow the rules. Records of unacceptable behaviour provide a clear and systematic approach to pupils reflecting on their action. You are quite clear that this system works very well; there are few repeats and the school does not operate systems for detentions or internal exclusions. Nevertheless, records show that while permanent exclusions are rare, there is an increase in fixed-term exclusions. The analysis of pupils' behaviour relates to serious misconduct, but does not take into consideration low-level disruption to identify patterns of unacceptable behaviour. Pupils are confident and adamant that bullying is rare and refer to it as 'teasing'.

Different groups get on well together and reflect the emphasis you and other staff place on the school's values. Pupils speak with conviction about their understanding of the following concepts: respect, tolerance, trust, peace and democracy. Pupils told inspectors that they learn a lot about different cultures and faith systems and understand other ways of life and 'are less ignorant'. You also ensure that pupils know about discriminatory practices that are linked to the characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010. This contributes to pupils demonstrating a high level of tolerance towards the diverse faith groups, as well as to those pupils of no faith.

Pupils spoken to say that they are safe in the school. They recognise and appreciate all of the systems used to protect them. Pupils have trusting relationships with staff and described them as 'family friends who respect and understand them' who 'will point out when they are wrong'. They maintain a high level of confidence in their teachers and other staff and say that there is always someone they can turn to if they have concerns. Pupils value the support and direction that learning mentors provide.

Across the phases, pupils work hard. They persist with activities for long periods and work with deep levels of concentration. Pupils are highly motivated and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning; they value their teachers' work and are responsive to them and the teaching assistants. Pupils work well together; relationships are harmonious and peaceful. This mature comment from a pupil in the primary phase conveys how well different groups get on with each other, 'Anyone who is different is treated equally, we welcome all with open arms.' Pupils carry out a range of civic duties in the wider community to support charities, while in the school they perform ambassadorial duties and mentor anyone struggling, for example, with their reading.

Most pupils attend regularly. Your work with parents leads to improvement in attendance and punctuality. Attendance over the last two school years is similar to the national average. You have taken a stance against unauthorised holidays and you are vigilant about pupils missing education. As a result, current information for this academic year shows improvement in the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. However, while a few identified groups of pupils do not always attend regularly, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are absent because of medical appointments.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that known groups who do not attend school regularly improve their rates of attendance.
- Analyse behaviour records more incisively to identify patterns among the few pupils who occasionally do not follow the high expectations of behaviour.

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

published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Carmen Rodney

Her Majesty's Inspector