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15 October 2018

Ms J Cochrane  
Headteacher  
Sir Henry Floyd Grammar School  
Oxford Road  
Aylesbury  
Buckinghamshire  
HP21 8PE

Dear Ms Cochrane

### **No formal designation inspection of Sir Henry Floyd Grammar School**

Following my visit with Harry Ingham, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 2 to 3 October 2018, 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 at the request of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector in order to check the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements at the school.

### **Evidence**

Inspectors scrutinised documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements, including relevant policies and the school's central record of recruitment checks on staff. They met with groups of pupils, school leaders, teachers and support staff, representatives of the local governing body, and the Insignis Academy Trust (IAT) chair of trustees. The lead inspector spoke on the telephone with the IAT chief executive officer (CEO) and with a representative of the local authority. Inspectors visited a small sample of relationships and sex education (RSE) lessons, tutor-time sessions and an assembly. They considered the findings from recent staff and pupil questionnaires carried out by the school, from minutes of governors' meetings and from leaders' records about pupils' attendance and behaviour.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

## **Context**

Sir Henry Floyd is an above-average sized selective grammar school for pupils aged 11 to 18. There are currently 1298 pupils on roll, including 408 in the sixth form. Just under two thirds of pupils are from a white British background. The remainder represent a range of other ethnic groups, with an average proportion believed to speak English as an additional language. Less than 10% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well below the national average. Similarly, the proportion of pupils who have a special educational need and/or disability, including those who have an education, health and care plan, is well below national figures.

The school was most recently inspected by Ofsted in January 2016, under section 5 of the education act, and was judged to be outstanding. In September 2018, the former headteacher took up the post of chief executive of IAT, and you were appointed as headteacher at Sir Henry Floyd. At the same time, another school joined the trust and, consequently, trust and governance arrangements have recently changed. The IAT board of trustees has overall responsibility for governance at Sir Henry Floyd, but with aspects delegated to a local governing body. The chair of the board of trustees is temporarily also the chair of the local governing body.

## **Main findings**

Over time, leaders have established a clear and shared determination to prepare pupils as well as possible for their future. Your work to safeguard pupils is central to this vision. You rightly aspire for pupils to become good citizens as well as being successful academically. This results in a nurturing environment that enables pupils to flourish and make considered decisions that contribute to their own safety and welfare, while being supported well by the adults that care for them.

Leaders use helpful systems and effective training to support their safeguarding work. They make careful checks on adults coming into the school, such as employees, governors and volunteers, to ensure that they are suitable to work with pupils. Leaders keep detailed records of these checks and are vigilant in considering and minimising potential risks linked to visitors and temporary staff. For example, a minor administrative error on the school's single central record of recruitment checks was resolved promptly at the start of the inspection.

All staff receive regular safeguarding training, beginning when they join the school and enhanced successfully by pertinent and timely updates. Consequently, staff understand their responsibilities for pupils' welfare and take these duties very seriously. Both teaching and non-teaching staff know about the recent changes to national safeguarding legislation and what this means for practice in their school.

They understand specific risk factors linked to the school's context and the possible implications for pupils' mental health and other relevant local issues, such as those linked to drugs and radicalisation. This enables staff to remain vigilant in identifying behaviour that may indicate a child is at risk, and to take prompt action when such concerns arise. They are supported very well in this work by leaders responsible for safeguarding in school.

Over the past eighteen months, changes to safeguarding leadership arrangements have increased the school's capacity to act quickly and effectively when a concern arises about a child. The raising achievement team has been established, and additional staff have undergone designated safeguarding lead (DSL) training. As a result, suitably trained staff are always on hand to deal promptly with issues that arise, even if, as currently, a member of the DSL team is absent from work for a prolonged period. Clear systems of accountability and detailed records ensure that no-one 'slips through the net' and enable leaders to identify emerging patterns that may indicate that a pupil is at risk of harm. Potentially vulnerable pupils are supported very well, securing help from beyond the school where appropriate. Leaders work openly with families where possible, but always in the best interests of the pupil.

Pupils say that they feel very safe and are supported well by those around them. Several who spoke to inspectors described a sense of 'family' or 'home' that is evident in the school, and which pupils value greatly. During social times and moving around the school, pupils are friendly and respectful, interacting positively with each other and the adults around them. They talk about their school as a 'great community', where people 'look out for each other'. They appreciate being able to visit the raising achievement office to share concerns that they may have, safe in the knowledge that adults will help them sensitively and discretely. Adults give particularly careful thought to supporting vulnerable sixth-form students in managing the transition into adulthood, helping them to access appropriate guidance from beyond the school.

Pupils relish leadership opportunities that present themselves frequently and are keenly sought after. They understand that contributing to the life of the school is an expectation rather than an enrichment option. The vast majority attend school regularly and behave well. When this is not the case, leaders address any issues effectively, understanding relevant contexts without accepting them as an excuse. Their challenge to pupils, working with their families and other support from beyond the school, helps attendance to improve and leaders to know that pupils are safe.

Opportunities for pupils' personal development are a real strength of the school. Pupils benefit from rich experiences that help them to consider the world around them in a mature and thoughtful way. They learn how to identify and manage potential risks, such as through their involvement in World Challenge events. The RSE curriculum meets their needs appropriately, adapting in response to emerging issues. Leaders ensure that pupils have a well-developed understanding of e-safety

risks, and teach them to be aware of, and how to manage, rather than avoid, those risks. Pupils describe a clear understanding of the different types of bullying, and they say that it rarely happens in their school but is dealt with effectively if it does.

The local governing body and IAT have absolute confidence in school leaders' commitment to pupils' welfare. They place great value in leaders' honest reflections about the effectiveness of their safeguarding work, which are verified by governors' annual audit of provision. Governors have useful systems in place for checking that all relevant policies and procedures are fit for purpose. However, the current child protection policy, while within its annual review cycle, has not been updated to reflect changes to legislation in September 2018, which complement the effective practice that already exists in school. Recent changes to trust and local governance arrangements have contributed to the delay in publishing a new version of this policy. Governors and trustees are suitably experienced and skilled, with some training due to be refreshed as the new local governing body and trust arrangements emerge. As governance processes evolve, governors and trustees rightly recognise this as an opportunity to reflect on how they can ensure that their checks on safeguarding policies and practice are both timely and even more rigorous, in order to support leaders' constantly reflective approach.

### **External support**

You and your team work openly with experts beyond the school, actively seeking ways to further enhance your safeguarding arrangements for the benefit of your pupils. You recognise the potential advantages that recent changes to trust arrangements will bring in this regard and are exploring ways to learn through working more closely with colleagues in other schools. Trustees are already planning to develop how working as part of an expanding trust can help the school to enhance the strong provision that is already evident.

Your staff are tenacious in seeking effective help for pupils, engaging with a wide range of experts from beyond the school in order to support pupils' mental health and behavioural challenges. You are creative in finding ways to access additional resources, such as working closely with Aylesbury College to secure extra counselling support for pupils who need it. You work openly with the local authority to raise concerns around pupils and their families, proactively securing early help for those who need it, and persisting if you are unsuccessful at the first attempt.

You, governors and trustees reflect constantly on your safeguarding practice, considering carefully and acting on lessons learned from any situations that arise. You seek reassurance from the local authority to check that arrangements are not just suitable but are of the highest standard. Where stretched resources prevent a timely response, you look for alternative expertise to verify the quality of your work, acting on the feedback that you receive. This helps to ensure that safeguarding arrangements remain of good quality and that everything reasonably possible is done to protect pupils' welfare.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Use best practice from across and beyond the trust to reflect on, and develop, how leaders and governors check safeguarding policies and arrangements systematically and efficiently, so that you can be sure that they always meet requirements as effectively as the day-to-day culture in the school does.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Buckinghamshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kathryn Moles

**Her Majesty's Inspector**