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16 October 2018

Mr Robert Jones  
Headteacher  
RNIB Three Spires Academy  
Kingsbury Road  
Coundon  
Coventry  
CV6 1PJ

Dear Mr Jones

### **No formal designation inspection of RNIB Three Spires Academy**

Following my visit with Susan Lowry, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 4 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 no-notice 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 and aspects of leadership and management at the school.

### **Evidence**

We scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. We met with you, the designated safeguarding lead, a governor, a representative of the trust, a group of staff, pupils and parents.

We made short visits to every classroom. During these visits, we looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils. Behaviour in lessons and during social time was also observed.

Various school documents were scrutinised, including a range of policies, the staff code of conduct, improvement plans, the self-evaluation, and minutes of meetings of the governing body and the board of trustees. Information about pupils' behaviour, attendance and welfare was also analysed.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

## **Context**

RNIB Three Spires Academy is a special school for pupils who have moderate or severe learning difficulties. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average. Currently, there are 83 pupils on roll, including five children who attend early years provision.

The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and who speak English as an additional language are above average. Most pupils are boys.

## **Leadership and management**

You and your managers have created an effective safeguarding culture in the school. This aspect of the school's work is well led by the deputy headteacher, who is the designated safeguarding lead. Other leaders are also trained to lead on safeguarding pupils.

All staff have received appropriate training and receive regular updates on how to keep pupils safe. They use the most up-to-date guidance and are very clear about their responsibilities and duties. Thorough procedures are in place, so staff know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil's welfare. The system for recording and reporting concerns is straightforward and used well.

Leaders and staff follow up matters tenaciously. They work well with families and outside agencies to help keep pupils safe. The family support worker regularly meets with parents and offers advice. She ensures that early help is put in place when required.

During the inspection, parents told us that their children felt safe and raised no concerns about safeguarding. Clear procedures at the start and end of the day and appropriate levels of supervision in lessons and during social time help pupils stay safe.

Pupils are taught to stay safe in a range of situations. They learn about how to keep themselves safe at home and in the community. The curriculum covers relationships and health education, and e-safety. Governors have ensured that there are appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place to promote online safety.

The local governing body monitors practice and holds leaders to close account for the safeguarding of pupils. The safeguarding governor is knowledgeable, attends regular training and receives bulletins to remain up to date with developments. Governors undertake audits, challenge school leaders and ensure that safeguarding practice is robust.

The site is secure. You have ensured that thorough checks are in place for visitors and staff. All necessary checks for the recruitment of staff have been completed.

However, there were some minor administrative errors in the school's recording of these checks; these were put right immediately.

The school has a detailed child protection and safeguarding policy that reflects the latest guidance. Other policies linked to safeguarding have been recently updated and contain the required information. The whistleblowing policy is thorough and understood by staff, but the behaviour policy and the staff code of conduct require revisions.

Leaders have taken effective action to help pupils behave well. There are clear routines and staff have been trained in managing pupils' behaviour. Most staff are very skilled at de-escalating situations and helping pupils make positive choices. Incidents of pupils' inappropriate behaviour are declining, and the use of physical intervention is rare.

The behaviour and anti-bullying policies link together and support safeguarding practice. They have been recently updated but the behaviour policy does not clearly explain procedures. Leaders have not ensured that the current policy gives a comprehensive outline of how to respond to inappropriate behaviour.

Most pupils have good levels of attendance and absence is followed up swiftly. Staff check that pupils who are absent are safe, and leaders ensure that protocols for children missing education are followed.

The school is a calm and orderly environment. Pupils receive a friendly welcome when they arrive in the morning and most enjoy productive relationships with staff. Praise is used effectively, and pupils respond positively to rewards. They are encouraged to learn with each other and tackle tasks that they find challenging. Staff have high expectations of pupils.

The school has a suitable complaints policy that you follow as required. When complaints or concerns are raised, you act quickly and follow agreed procedures. A staff code of conduct, which covers all the required areas, is also in place. However, it lacks specific detail and does not make direct reference to the professional standards for teaching assistants or the teachers' standards. Leaders plan to revise this soon.

RNIB Three Spires Academy is the only school in the RNIB Specialist Services Trust. Many functions of governance are delegated to the local governing body. The governors use their range of knowledge, skills and experience to hold leaders to close account.

### **External support**

RNIB Specialist Services Trust provides financial, health and safety, human resources, and other specialist services to the school. Leaders also commission

good-quality and regular governor and safeguarding support from Coventry local authority.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Update the staff code of conduct so it reflects the relevant professional standards and is explicit about leaders' expectations of staff behaviour.
- Revise the behaviour policy so that it gives clearer guidance on procedures to manage pupils' behaviour.
- Take action to make sure that all staff adhere to the revised code of conduct and the updated behaviour policy.
- Ensure that trustees maintain an oversight of the single central record.

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

Yours sincerely

Simon Mosley  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**