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30 April 2019

Miss Victoria Miller  
Oscott Manor School  
Old Oscott Hill  
Birmingham  
West Midlands  
B44 9SP

Dear Miss Miller

### **No formal designation inspection of Oscott Manor School**

Following my visit to your school on 2 April 2019, 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 in the school, including governance, and the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils at the school.

### **Evidence**

The inspector scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, a pastoral manager, a group of parents, members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair and a representative of the local authority.

The inspector spoke with several pupils and members of staff during the day. In addition, the responses of parents and staff to internal school surveys were considered. Several documents were scrutinised, including attendance and behaviour records, risk assessments, curriculum overviews, health and safety records, first-aid reports, an external audit of safeguarding, and minutes of governors' meetings.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

## **Context**

This is a community special school for pupils aged 11 to 19 years. All pupils have an education, health and care plan with autism as their primary need. There are 115 pupils on roll. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average. The school has a higher-than-average proportion of disadvantaged pupils.

The headteacher joined the school in September 2017. A deputy headteacher and business manager joined the school in April 2018. Since being in post, the headteacher has successfully recruited to vacant positions and the school is now fully staffed.

## **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding has a high profile in the school and all staff understand that keeping pupils safe is their top priority. Members of staff are well trained in many aspects of safeguarding, including those related to female genital mutilation and children missing from education. They are regularly reminded and updated about the school's systems and aspects of safeguarding of which they should be aware. Consequently, members of staff refer any concern they have about a pupil, secure in the knowledge that leaders will deal with their concern quickly and appropriately. Leaders involve outside agencies correctly to secure additional support for pupils who need it. They seek advice and support from the local authority whenever they need it.

Safeguarding in the school is well led. The school's policies and procedures are clear and fit for purpose. There is appropriate filtering of the internet. Procedures to ensure that staff are recruited safely are understood and used well. The school's single central record is complete and well organised. It meets requirements and is regularly checked by the headteacher.

Governors understand and carry out their roles and responsibilities with regard to safeguarding thoroughly. There is a named governor for safeguarding. A committee for safeguarding, inclusion and behaviour regularly reports to the full governing body. Governors are trained in many aspects of safeguarding, including issues related to peer-on-peer abuse and forced marriage. Leaders check on governors' understanding using written quizzes.

Through the curriculum and assemblies, pupils are taught about e-safety and relationships and sex education. Pupils are well managed as they arrive at the start of the day. This high level of supervision continues until they leave at the end of the

school day. Pupils are encouraged to take controlled risks, for example in the forest school. This is helping to develop their resilience.

Site staff respond in a timely way to address any reported health and safety concerns. Records show that appropriate health and safety checks are up to date. As a result, the site is safe.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. Staff and parents agree.

## **Behaviour and welfare**

The school is calm and orderly throughout the day. Pupils move sensibly around the school. The school rules of 'Ready, respectful and safe' reinforce leaders' expectations of pupils' good behaviour. At breaktime and lunchtime pupils behave well.

Relationships are purposeful. Staff focus on de-escalating incidents and building relationships. As a result, exclusions are used appropriately and as a sanction of last resort. On return from exclusion, pupils talk about their actions and are helped to understand how they may have behaved differently. Pupils are referred to external agencies, where appropriate, for additional support.

Staff know their pupils well. Personalised risk assessments identify specific strategies to help meet pupils' needs and staff use these effectively. Pupils are encouraged to find ways to manage their own behaviour. For example, a new project being led by the occupational therapist with a targeted group of pupils, on the use of 'the zones of regulation', is beginning to make a difference by reducing the number of incidents of emotionally triggered behaviour.

Staff and pupils say that, sometimes, pupils experience bullying. However, they say that on the rare occasions it happens, leaders deal with it quickly and thoroughly. Pupils have a say in the running of the school. For example, as a result of a discussion with the school council, seven pupils are being trained as anti-bullying ambassadors.

Attendance remains low. Lost learning time for a number of pupils is hindering their progress. Leaders' efforts to address this issue, so far, have resulted in little improvement.

## **Leadership and management**

Leaders have a clear and moral purpose to create a caring and inclusive school. They are committed to improving the life chances of pupils. The relatively new senior leadership team already commands the confidence of governors, staff and parents.

Leaders are outward facing. For example, collaborative work with a range of external partners has resulted in pupils accessing an employability skills course

aimed at preparing them well for the next stage of their education, employment and training.

Leadership in relation to safeguarding and pupils' personal development and welfare is strong. Leaders ensure that all statutory requirements are met. The headteacher provides a strong model for these aspects of leadership.

Governance has been strengthened recently by the addition of three new governors. Members of the governing body continue to grow in confidence and expertise. Consequently, governance is strong in the school and provides a good level of support for, and challenge to, leaders.

Parents are highly supportive of the school. When talking to parents, a typical comment was, 'This school is amazing.' Parents value the care and support given to their children. They say that staff understand their children's needs well and go the extra mile to meet these needs.

Communication between home and school takes a variety of forms, including telephone calls, emails, use of the home-school diary and daily contact with key workers or the class teacher. Parents find this communication reassuring and say that it contributes to their children being happy at school.

### **External support**

Leaders have developed highly successful working relationships with the local authority's safeguarding team. As a result, there is a strong culture of safeguarding.

Effective support given to senior leaders by the local authority priority partner has contributed towards the strong leadership of the school.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Leaders work with parents to improve the attendance of those pupils who continue to be regularly absent.

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

Yours sincerely

Lesley Yates

**Her Majesty's Inspector**