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25 October 2019

Mrs Karen Jones  
Principal  
Laisterdyke Leadership Academy  
Thornbury Road  
Bradford  
West Yorkshire  
BD3 8HE

Dear Mrs Jones

### **No formal designation inspection of Laisterdyke Leadership Academy**

Following my visit with Fiona Dixon, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 16 October 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This 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 wished to determine the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements at the school as concerns had been raised with Ofsted about aspects of the effectiveness of leadership and management in the school (including governance), and behaviour and attitudes of pupils.

### **Evidence**

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements, including the recent local authority safeguarding audit. We also considered how leaders manage any allegations against members of staff. We talked with groups of pupils and staff, both formally and informally around the site, about how safe they feel in school. We met with the leader who has specific responsibility for child protection.

Inspectors scrutinised records of pupils' attendance and the records of fixed-term exclusions. We met with the leaders responsible for attendance, behaviour and personal development.

Inspectors also met with you, acting vice-principal, the executive director for education and the executive director for quality assurance from the Star Academies trust.

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

The school is taking effective action to improve the effectiveness of leadership and management and pupils' behaviour and attitudes.

Safeguarding arrangements are effective.

## **Context**

Laisterdyke Leadership Academy has 906 pupils on roll, including 53 students in the sixth form. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average. The majority of pupils are of Asian British-Pakistani origin, with other pupils of Asian British-Bangladeshi origin. There is a proportion of pupils who are of White-Romany or Gypsy origin. A small proportion of pupils are White British. The number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to support for special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.

The school was inspected in February 2019 and was judged to require improvement. The school's arrangements for safeguarding were judged to be effective. Since the inspection, Ofsted has received concerns about pupils' behaviour and attitudes, leadership and management and issues of a safeguarding nature. This inspection focused on the wider issues arising from these concerns.

The evidence gathered in this inspection indicates that the school has not declined from its level of performance as judged at the previous inspection in February 2019. However, leaders need to take further, urgent action for the school to move towards being good at its next full inspection.

Since your appointment in October 2018, with support from the trust, you have identified and robustly tackled areas of weak leadership and teaching. You have taken appropriate actions to ensure that your high aspirations and expectations are implemented consistently by all senior leaders. In May 2019, you appointed a new assistant principal with an overview of behaviour and in September 2019 two additional senior leaders were deployed to the school by the trust to support improvements in pupils' personal development, inclusion and the quality of teaching. As a result, the capacity for further improvement in leadership and management has increased.

You and the trust have taken all the appropriate actions when complaints against staff have been received. The systems and procedures that you and the trust use to investigate any issues or complaints are robust and followed systematically. You ensure that following investigations, all staff are provided with appropriate training. This practice helps to keep pupils safe.

School leaders recently reviewed the school's behaviour policy and raised expectations further. You reviewed the use of the 'Impact Centre' in order to provide more effective support for those pupils who struggle to adjust to the new heightened expectations. Pupils, including students in the sixth form, and staff reported that behaviour in classrooms has improved significantly during the last 12 months. Pupils also said that members of staff are visible on corridors during the change of lessons. Inspection evidence confirms this. However, there is a lack of consistency in the way that staff implement the new behaviour policy. As a result, although improving, some low-level disruption still exists in some lessons. The behaviour of pupils when moving in the corridors between lessons, break and lunchtimes is variable. Some pupils struggle to self-regulate their behaviour and as a result, corridors can be noisy environments during social times.

Your work to improve behaviour has included the use of fixed-term exclusion as a sanction. These exclusions increased during last year, but now, as a result of improved systems at school, the number of pupils missing learning time because of being excluded, has decreased. You and your leaders track incidents of misbehaviour with accuracy and respond accordingly. Your pastoral team work closely with pupils to ensure that the right support is in place for them to help them improve their behaviour. Attendance is also monitored and leaders are beginning to be more proactive in their work with pupils and families to ensure that attendance is improving. However, improving overall attendance and reducing further persistent absence are still areas of focus for school leaders.

Since the previous inspection, there have been some complaints about the safety of staff and pupils in the school. The trust and the local authority have looked into these complaints. A wide range of staff and pupils spoken to during this inspection said that they feel safe in school. Inspection evidence confirms this. Pupils told us that bullying sometimes happens, but they all know an adult they could go to and are confident that the problem would be sorted out effectively. Pupils could also tell us about how they are learning, in lessons, assemblies and form time activities, to keep themselves safe, especially about knife crime and gang culture. Some pupils, who spoke to inspectors, are aware of the risks of radicalisation and extremism, but some are not so sure. You agreed with me that this is an ongoing area for development for the school. The newly revised personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum, covers in detail all aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development but is at the early stages of implementation across all year groups.

You, senior leaders and staff take your safeguarding responsibilities seriously. As a result, there is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. You have ensured that staff are up to date in the necessary training for safeguarding pupils, such as the dangers related to knife crime and gang culture, signs of female genital mutilation and drug abuse. Recently, staff also had training on recognising signs of radicalisation and extremism. You have ensured that during the weekly staff briefings, safeguarding updates are discussed. Staff are clear on what they need to

do if they have any concerns about a pupil. Staff are also clear on their statutory responsibility to report any concerns about other members of staff should any arise and how to do this. You have a secure and clear understanding of how to manage any such allegations against members of staff.

### **External support**

You have worked closely with the local authority during a recent safeguarding audit and you have acted on their recommendations. The school's safeguarding leader works more closely with the local authority safeguarding leaders. As a result, referrals to agencies are timely and any actions are monitored. You and your leaders have also engaged with various agencies to support vulnerable pupils through targeted interventions, including the use of a cognitive behaviour therapist. Agencies include: 'Breaking the Cycle' (youth violence), 'Sharing Voices' (inclusion and mental health) and the Young Carers association. External visitors talk to pupils about knife crime and gang culture.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Accelerate the pace of improving the attendance of all pupils, including the disadvantaged pupils.
- Continue to embed the planned PSHE education curriculum so that all pupils have a strong understanding of how to recognise and respond appropriately and safely to a range of diverse views and values.
- Ensure that expectations about behaviour are consistently high across the school, in and out of the classroom, especially when pupils move around through the corridors.

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

Yours sincerely

Dimitris Spiliotis  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**