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12 February 2021

Kate Beale  
Headteacher  
Lindsworth School  
Monyhull Hall Road  
Kings Norton  
Birmingham  
B30 3QA

Dear Mrs Beale

### **No formal designation inspection of Lindsworth School**

Following my inspection with Alun Williams, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on Wednesday 3 February 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the findings.

This inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for no formal designation (NFD) inspections. 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 bullying and the behaviour management of pupils. Concerns were also raised about how leaders manage any complaints that are made.

We do not give graded judgements on these inspections. Under normal circumstances, if we find some evidence that overall standards may be declining, but no serious concerns have been identified, then the next inspection of the school will normally be a section 5 inspection and be brought forward. If we identify significant concerns, we will deem this inspection as being completed under section 5 of the Act.

Having considered all the evidence and taking into account the impact of COVID-19 on the school, I am of the opinion that at this time:

#### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Priorities for further improvement:

- continue to access and engage with support offered and brokered through the local authority

- improve how leaders evaluate the wealth of information they have at their fingertips about behaviour so that they, and governors, are better able to recognise patterns and trends, and judge the impact that improvement actions are having.

## **Context**

- The school defederated from Springfield House School in October 2020. Following this, a new governing body of Lindsworth School was formed on 19 October 2020.
- The majority of staffing has been stable over a prolonged period of time. However, over the last year there has been a change in leadership. The executive headteacher left the school in December 2020. The previous head of school became the headteacher on 1 January 2021.
- From the start of the academic year in September 2020, the school opened to all pupils. Since the start of the current national lockdown in January 2021, pupils have attended school on a rota basis. Over a two-week period, they attend school for five days and receive the rest of their education remotely. Remote education is provided through a combination of online learning and paper-based packs. The school has provided a laptop to every pupil who requested one, to enable them to access the online learning.
- Vulnerable pupils and children of key and critical workers attend school on a full-time basis. Approximately a quarter of pupils on roll are attending school full time. Year 11 pupils continue to access their alternative provision one day per week, as well as attending school and accessing remote education.
- A very small number of staff have been unable to return to school as a result of COVID-19.

## **Main findings**

- Staff are acutely aware of pupils' significant vulnerabilities. There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Staff are very vigilant and continually look for any signs that pupils may be suffering from, or are at risk of, harm and report their concerns immediately. Leaders respond to all concerns straight away and work closely with a wide range of services to get the support that pupils need to keep them safe. When leaders do not feel that external agencies are providing the right support, they challenge them robustly and go to great lengths to seek the support pupils need. The recent link and work with the community police officer is helping to further safeguard pupils in the community.
- Leaders' safeguarding record keeping is meticulous. Detailed information is logged, and leaders spot any developing issues quickly. This enables them to intervene and provide preventative support to try to mitigate any potential

escalation in safeguarding concerns. Leaders ensure that all staff receive regular safeguarding training and updates, and check that they adhere to all the school's safeguarding policies and procedures.

- Following some turbulence in leadership, the new headteacher has quickly drawn the staff together to create a strong team who are all committed to the school's ethos and vision. As a result of some challenging situations and the additional challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the headteacher has paid a great deal of attention to ensuring the staff's well-being is supported. Staff appreciate this.
- The headteacher has identified the school's strengths, such as safeguarding and behaviour management, and has also identified where further improvements need to be made. For example, the school is developing wider pastoral support for pupils and further developing middle leaders. Leaders demonstrate that they have the commitment and necessary skills to continue to drive further improvements across the school.
- The governing body was reformed following the defederation from Springfield House School in October 2020. They work closely with, and are fully supportive of, the new leadership team. Governors hold leaders to account well by supporting and challenging them to ensure that the school continues to safeguard pupils and provide a high-quality education. To help them achieve this even more effectively, governors are commissioning a review of governance, safeguarding and the quality of teaching and learning.
- There are very positive and respectful relationships between staff and pupils. Staff know and understand pupils' vulnerabilities and needs in great detail. Because of this, they are able to de-escalate potentially challenging incidents skilfully and quickly. This contributes to the calm and orderly atmosphere around the school. Pupils recognise and appreciate the support and care that staff provide for them.
- Leaders maintain meticulous records to enable them to monitor incidents related to pupils' behaviour. They take swift action to address any specific behaviour issues identified. For example, recently there has been a whole school focus on anti-bullying following an increase in the number of racist and homophobic incidents. Even though leaders track individual incidents closely and carefully, the overall evaluation of patterns and trends in behaviour over time could be further improved.
- Leaders are very proactive at finding additional support to help pupils take responsibility for and improve their behaviour. For example, they have engaged the support of a speech and language therapist to improve pupils' communication skills. They are also enhancing pastoral support for pupils with a focus on helping pupils to self-regulate their emotions.

- The complaints policy follows the guidance set out by the Department for Education and records show that leaders adhere to the policy when investigating complaints. The complaints the school receives are rare. Nevertheless, leaders take all complaints seriously and investigate and record them thoroughly. Leaders recognise that previously some communication with complainants about the outcome of investigations has not been timely or clear enough. Leaders have reviewed previous handling of complaints and are rectifying the issues identified.
- Historically, leaders have not engaged with additional guidance and support from external agencies well enough. This has limited staff's professional development and their ability to drive necessary school improvements. However, recently leaders have begun to explore and seek wider support and professional development, including from services brokered through the local authority. It is too early to judge if the support they are beginning to engage with is effective. The current leadership is fully committed to working with a wide range of services to ensure that all staff receive support and training to enable them to deliver high quality of education for pupils.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted on site due to concerns about safeguarding, bullying and behaviour, and how leaders manage complaints.

We scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. We met with the headteacher and assistant headteacher, the pastoral lead, the leader responsible for safeguarding, pupils, staff and the chair of the governing body. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.

We also scrutinised behaviour records. We reviewed how complaints are recorded and followed up, and reviewed a range of additional documentation relating to leadership and governance. We had a tour of the school site and visited lessons.

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

Ann Pritchard  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**