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Mrs Nusret Ellahi

Headteacher

The Olive School Blackburn

Bicknell Street

Blackburn

Lancashire

BB1 7EY

Dear Mrs Ellahi

No formal designation monitoring inspection of The Olive School Blackburn

Following my visit with Jean Olsson-Law, Her Majesty's Inspector, and Mark Williams, Her Majesty's Inspector to your school on 8 July 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with the no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because the Secretary of State for Education raised concerns with the Chief Inspector about the effectiveness of safeguarding and leadership and management at the school.

Evidence

Her Majesty's Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. They met with the Chief Executive of the Trust, the headteacher, the Chair of the Local Governing Body and a quality assurance officer of the Tauheedul Education Trust. Inspectors spoke with members of staff, groups of pupils, six parents and held a telephone conversation with a local authority officer. Key policies, including those for behaviour and anti-bullying, and evidence linked to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development were reviewed. Minutes of meetings of the governing body, the headteacher's report to the governors, recruitment and selection procedures, and curriculum planning documents were examined. Additionally, attendance information was reviewed along with the school's audit for tackling extremism.

Inspectors covered all areas of the school, including the separate Year 1 unit, visiting classrooms, talking to pupils, looking at pupils' workbooks and at displays.

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

The school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

Context

The Olive School opened as a three-form entry, Muslim faith-based primary school in September 2013. It was set up in response to demand from the local community. It is part of the Tauheedul Education Trust (TET) family of schools. TET's vision is to develop a national model for progressive, mainstream and positive Muslim free schools that provide pupils with outstanding academic foundations to help them become exemplary members of their community.

Currently it has three year groups: Reception, Year 1 and Year 3 with a total of 240 pupils. The school is oversubscribed; for September 2014, there were 241 applications for 90 places. The school has not yet received a full inspection by Ofsted.

All pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and almost all speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is small. This is additional funding the school receives for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are in local authority care. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, who are supported at school action, or school action plus, is low.

At the time of this inspection, all Year 1 pupils and some staff were out of school on a trip to Blackpool Zoo.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils behave well in lessons and play happily together in the school grounds at break times. This is due to well-established routines, known and understood by pupils, and high expectations of conduct from all adults. Respectful behaviour is modelled by adults. Pupils reflect this when talking to their teachers, peers and visitors.

Pupils spoke confidently about the common characteristics of all faiths as being good, gentle, kind, caring, helpful and honest. These are reflected in the school's golden rules which are displayed around the school, emphasised during assemblies and through circle time in classrooms. Pupils demonstrate a growing awareness of the main teachings, beliefs and festivals associated with the major world religions.

Pupils are polite, courteous and have very positive attitudes to learning. From starting school, they concentrate, work hard, want to please their teachers and appreciate the efforts of their friends. For example, there was spontaneous applause from a Year 2 class after two pupils acted out a scene from *Pinocchio*. Displays provide aids to learning, detailing for example, times tables and phonics (the sounds letters make). They also outline the steps pupils need to take to achieve the next level in their work. Pupils' work is exhibited and celebrated, and shows the wide range of subjects they study. Pupils feel safe and are confident that adults will resolve any episodes of poor behaviour. Where standards of behaviour fall below the high expectations set, these are recorded carefully in a class book. However, leaders recognise that they need to collate this information more rigorously so that they can spot any trends in individual pupils' behaviour and provide support.

Teachers promote good behaviour consistently well across the school so that pupils receive the same message in each class. Pupils aspire to be placed on the 'rainbow' and try to avoid being placed on the 'grey cloud'. Pupils and parents like the use of the loyalty card system; pupils have a card and collect olive stamps which lead to receiving hampers of 'goodies', including erasers and/or pencils.

Attendance rates are high. Parents spoken with said that their children are very keen to get to school in the mornings, so have no trouble arriving on time.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Leaders at all levels demonstrate a very strong and clear vision for the school. This vision is built on high expectations for academic success, excellent behaviour and preparation of pupils to live and work in a culturally diverse society. Staff actively support and promote this vision; they are proud to be members of the school. The parents inspectors spoke with said that they had chosen the school for those reasons. Respect is at the heart of the school's vision and underpins the work of all members of the school community.

Safeguarding arrangements are well organised and meet requirements. Recruitment and selection processes adhere to the local authority model. As part of these processes, a range of background checks are carried out on prospective staff. This now extends to a full and thorough check on any individual who is invited in to speak to the pupils. Staff have received training in child protection, spirituality, e-safety and inclusivity. Staff and governors have received an introductory session in the local authority's 'Prevent' strategy, a government-funded initiative intended to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism; more in-depth training has been organised for September.

The curriculum meets the requirements of the academy's funding agreement. It is based on the new National Curriculum supplemented by the development of skills so that pupils study a wide range of subjects including religious education, life skills and citizenship. British values are promoted well and planning is clearly translated into practice. Plans show frequent reference to the use of music, television, video and

technology to bring pupils' learning to life. The curriculum is enriched by a range of after-school activities. Similarly, a variety of visits and visitors including a local vicar, and a trip to Blackpool Zoo, improve pupils' knowledge, skills and enjoyment of the different subjects. Themes connected to the curriculum such as Christian baptism and 'Good to be different', are introduced in daily assemblies and pupils explore these further during circle time in class.

The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. A wide range of good quality literature is used well to support this development. Displays in all areas of the school reflect pupils' work on traditional stories, poetry, art, music, British historical events and technology. Opportunities are provided for pupils to take on leadership roles such as school council members and to raise funds for charities.

Parents who met inspectors commented positively about the progress their children have made in a short time and their increased confidence and self-esteem. They praised the school's communication with them and feel they are true partners in their children's education.

Clear lines of accountability exist through the headteacher, the local governing body and the Trust Executive Board. Members of the governing body bring a variety of appropriate skills to the table and the headteacher's comprehensive reports help them to know what is going on in the school. The designated safeguarding governor is an educational welfare officer for the local authority with responsibility for investigating children at risk from radicalisation as part of the 'Prevent' programme.

External support

School leaders have engaged the advice and support from a range of sources including a former local authority adviser who knows the locality well. The school is outward looking. For example, links with several schools with different communities have been organised to make sure pupils from The Olive School have experiences of different cultures and faiths. The headteacher is part of the local network for headteachers.

Priorities for further improvement

- Collate information about behaviour so leadership has a clear view of behaviour over time and can ascertain whether or not any patterns are occurring.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services, to the Secretary of State for Education, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Chief Executive of the Trust. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Eileen Mulgrew
Senior Her Majesty's Inspector

Cc Chair of the Governing Body