

Serco Inspections  
Colmore Plaza  
20 Colmore Circus Queensway  
Birmingham  
B4 6AT

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T:** 01216 799154  
**Direct E:** aidan.dunne@serco.com



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Ruby Kundi  
Headteacher  
Highfield Junior and Infant School  
Highfield Road  
Saltley  
Birmingham  
B8 3QF

Dear Mrs Kundi

### **No formal designation monitoring inspection of Highfield Junior and Infant School**

Following my visit with John Seal, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 2-3 April 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 following a request from the Secretary of State.

### **Evidence**

Her Majesty's Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. They reviewed documents relating to the curriculum, personal, social, health and citizenship education, collective worship and governance. They met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and three assistant headteachers. They held discussions with four groups of pupils about staying safe, visited five lessons and joined the children for lunch time meals on both days. Her Majesty's Inspectors also spoke with parents and met with a group of staff. They met with the Chair of the Governing Body and three other members of the governing body. In addition, they held a telephone call with the local authority's school improvement adviser and considered the views of 73 staff who returned the inspection questionnaire for staff. There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's online survey, 'Parent View' so Her Majesty's Inspectors considered the latest parent survey carried out by the school.

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

**The school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.**

**The quality of leadership and management requires improvement.**

### **Context**

There are 838 pupils on roll. Nearly all pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The majority are of Pakistani origin. When they start at the school, many pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The proportions of pupils leaving and entering school at times other than the start of the academic year is greater than usually experienced by schools.

Six out of 10 pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils with a parent in the armed forces and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals). This is a very high proportion compared to most primary schools.

The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is broadly average. A higher-than-average proportion of pupils are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. Most of these pupils have learning difficulties or speech, language and communication needs. Most of the statements of special educational needs are for physical disabilities.

The school has difficulty in recruiting experienced staff.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils are taught about staying safe in lessons and during assemblies. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 have a well-developed awareness of how to look after, care and keep themselves safe. Older pupils are particularly astute when it comes to dealing with social media and the internet. The school has done a great deal to teach both pupils and their families about the importance of e-safety. They offer lessons to parents so they can help their children make good decisions when using mobile phones and computer tablets. Pupils know who to turn to for help and guidance. They say that they feel safe and cared for.

Behaviour around the school is largely good. The small school site is organised to minimise accidents. Pupils move around and between different parts of the building safely.

Persistent absence has reduced and overall attendance is improving. There are very few fixed term exclusions from the school.

## **The quality of leadership and management**

The headteacher is determined to provide an education for pupils that prepares them for life in contemporary British society. Pupils and staff use English at all times. Boys and girls are taught physical education lessons together. The staff subscribe to this approach as part of their performance management agreement. This explicitly commits teachers to maintaining public trust in the profession by upholding British values.

Staff support the inclusive values of the school. Teachers lead weekly collective worship, based on a theme, that explores the views of other major world faiths. Individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs, underpins the school's behaviour policy.

Despite this, the governing body does not fully support the school's ethos and values. For example, they have not pro-actively dealt with matters when parents have sought to undermine the headteacher's resolve to promote the school's values. They have not dealt with parental concerns in the way that they should for example they have advocated policies such as single-sex swimming lessons that do not reflect the inclusive ethos of the school. Governors have not paid sufficient attention to the school's sex and relationships education or equalities policies.

While safeguarding procedures and policies meet the current government requirements, and school staff have been trained, the oversight by governors is superficial. It is not clear to governors which governor leads on safeguarding. The governing body minutes lack detail on how safeguarding arrangements are checked. There is no reference in the safeguarding policy to risks to pupils from different cultural backgrounds, including consideration in safeguarding against risks around female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

Governors' awareness of safer recruitment practice is weak. They are largely reliant on senior leaders and the local authority to ensure that all appropriate checks are made. This is a concern as the local authority has little oversight or awareness of who is appointed to the governing body or who has had recent training in the safer recruitment procedures. Newly elected parent governors are required to provide a brief synopsis of why they wish to be governors but this is not expected of those who are appointed as local authority representatives. More than one member of the governing body is a governor of a number of other local schools.

## **External support**

This is inadequate. The local authority has not made the school aware of the existence of its 'Prevent strategy', a government funded initiative to prevent extreme or radical behaviour. Neither the governors nor the leaders in the school are aware

that external support is available to help them protect pupils who may be vulnerable to radical or extremist views.

The school's designated safeguarding officers are diligent and attend local authority and local safeguarding board meetings. However, they have received little guidance about concerns relating to radicalisation and wider cultural issues. Consequently, they are uncertain how to implement this in their school.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- An urgent external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved, including whether governors are suitable
- Improve the quality of the recording of governing body meetings so that they show how the governors are supporting and challenging the school, especially in relation to safeguarding
- As a matter of urgency, review the following policies and procedures: the sex and relationships policy, the complaints procedure policy, and the safeguarding children policy
- Ensure that the school's two senior designated safeguarding officers make all staff aware of the safeguarding risks relating to female genital mutilation and forced marriages and that all staff receive appropriate guidance in how to be alert to these
- Provide training to the school's designated safeguarding officers in relation to the 'Prevent' strategy.

Her Majesty's Inspectors will continue to monitor the school and will consider this is in determining the timing of the next full inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Birmingham City Children's Services and the Chair of the Governing Body. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Palk HMI  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

cc Chair of the Governing Body (or equivalent)