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11 February 2016

Mrs Linda Sullivan  
Headteacher  
Dale Community Primary School  
Porter Road  
Derby  
DE23 6NL

Dear Mrs Sullivan

### **No formal designation monitoring inspection of Dale Community Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 2 February 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and the time you took to discuss behaviour in your school.

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 Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about the school's published attendance information.

### **Evidence**

I considered evidence including:

- observations of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in lessons
- observations of pupils' behaviour throughout the day, including discussion with pupils
- documentary evidence
- discussions with school leaders and staff.

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

**Leaders and managers have taken effective action to maintain the high standards of behaviour and attitudes identified at the school's last inspection.**

## **Context**

The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language is well above average. Almost 70% of the school's population are of Pakistani heritage and just over 10% of pupils are now of Gypsy Roma heritage. The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority, is above average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well above average. A higher proportion of pupils than usual join or leave the school at other than the normal times.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

It is not clear why published information shows a dip in attendance during 2014. The school's own figures show average attendance during the same period and this level has been sustained. Persistent absence is below average. The school's attendance policy reflects the measures that the school takes to improve attendance. Systems to check attendance are thorough. The school works well with families to reduce absences. The 'late' book is well maintained and checked regularly. Good attendance and punctuality are expected but not always widely promoted in a range of ways to reflect the importance given to them by the school.

The school is a purposeful place. Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and know pupils well. A good level of support is provided for all pupils and especially for those whose circumstances make them more vulnerable, leading to pupils making good gains in their personal and emotional development.

At the start and the end of the school day, staff are present on the playground and supervise pupils well. The school is careful to notify parents about drop-off and collection times to ensure that pupils are safe. The parents I spoke to praised the school's work and said that their children are happy in school. They said that they had no concerns over pupils' behaviour. During playtime and lunchtime, staff engage pupils in sports activities and various games, which pupils enjoy. Pupils join in willingly, share apparatus and use all areas of the school playground safely. During my visit, pupils said that they like the mix of quiet areas and games areas and explained that all pupils can join in with any of the activities if they would like to. Pupils know the routines and respond very well when the bell is rung to signal that it is time to go into school. Pupils go in promptly, settle quickly and there is little time-wasting at the start of lessons.

In lessons, pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and listen attentively. They organise themselves without fuss and show independence, for example when logging on to computers. They follow instructions well and lose little time in moving from one task to another. Pupils talk keenly about their learning and contribute willingly in response to their teachers' questions. They show empathy towards newcomers to their school. For example, some pupils spoke to me about how they help pupils who arrive with little or no English to settle in. In the books that I looked at, pupils take care with their work and it is well presented.

Children in the early years respond well to the range of activities. They persevere well because staff provide interesting tasks and encourage them to work together. For example, children were very keen to talk to me about their dough-modelling, while others followed their teachers' instructions well when making biscuits. Classroom routines are clearly marked and develop children's understanding of sharing and turn-taking effectively.

Pupils' behaviour during assemblies is good. They move from classrooms sensibly and gather in the school hall quietly because staff consistently show their high expectations of how pupils should behave around school. Pupils pay full attention and offer their own views and ideas when invited by staff who lead the assemblies. During my visit, pupils' responses showed a good understanding of the value of honesty and of the terms 'jealousy' and 'selfishness'.

At lunchtime, the use of the dining hall is well organised to accommodate the large school community. Pupils and staff understand the systems and pupils' good behaviour aids the smooth running of the lunchtime break. Pupils socialise well in the dining hall and the atmosphere is calm. They line up to select their lunches and are polite to kitchen staff. Teaching assistants supervise at lunchtimes, indoors and outside, and maintain a consistent level of encouragement and discipline. Staff are very ably supported by the learning mentors who know individual pupils very well. They check on behaviour throughout the lunchtime break and identify any pupils who may need 'time out'. Those pupils who use the community room say that they like the opportunity to have some quiet time and that they enjoy the activities provided for them.

Discussion with pupils showed that they are proud of their school and of their school uniform. They value their friendships and the help they get from staff. They reported with great enthusiasm their achievements in a range of sports. Pupils in Year 6 are proud of their 'badges of responsibility', which give them privileges that they value and make a good contribution to their social development and confidence. Pupils like being praised for their efforts and strive to do well.

Pupils know the school's rules and understand the sanctions for unacceptable behaviour, including the use of the seclusion room. Those I spoke to during my visit agreed that it is not a good thing to have to go to the seclusion room but it is a good system to encourage good behaviour. Pupils said that they like the new 'house' system because they work together to gain points in return for good behaviour and positive attitudes. The pupils who are heads of the houses take their roles very seriously and proudly announced, 'We are role models'. They said that they understand the fairness of being elected and that they help other pupils who may have behaviour problems. The school's behaviour policy clearly places the responsibility for good behaviour on all members of the school community and leaders evaluate its effectiveness. As a result, the policy has been modified to involve pupils more fully in taking responsibility for their own learning behaviours, in order to improve already good behaviour. However, the 'house' system is too new to see the full impact yet.

The pupils I spoke to talked sensibly about the different forms of bullying and agreed that it is not a problem in their school. When I spoke to pupils about using the internet safely, they outlined the potential dangers and what the school does to keep them safe. They said that name-calling, including racist language, is rare but that any incidents that do occur are followed up by staff. This is confirmed by the school's bullying and incident logs, which show thorough systems to record and follow up any issues that do arise.

The school's single central record meets current statutory safeguarding requirements. Staff receive relevant training to keep pupils safe.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Embed the new behaviour systems and monitor their impact on pupils' involvement in being responsible for their learning behaviour.
- Establish a wider range of ways to promote the school's ethos of good attendance and punctuality.

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

Yours sincerely

Vivienne McTiffen  
**Ofsted Inspector**