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24 March 2018

Mrs Ann Walker  
Principal  
Kettering Park Junior Academy  
Wood Street  
Kettering  
Northamptonshire  
NN16 9SE

Dear Mrs Walker

### **No formal designation inspection of Kettering Park Junior Academy**

Following my visit to your academy on 20 March 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This monitoring 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 was concerned about aspects of the effectiveness of leadership and management in the school (including governance) and the contribution made by leaders to the well-being of pupils.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. I met with you, the deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, family support worker, learning mentor and the special educational needs coordinator. I also met with the chief executive officer of Inspire Multi-Academy Trust and the chief executive officer and improvement adviser from the Inspire Teaching School Alliance. I spoke with a governor. Along with senior leaders, I paid a short visit to classes from every year group and to 'the nest'. This was originally the caretaker's house when the school was built. It has recently been converted to provide useful space for you to offer additional support for pupils and families. I observed pupils during playtime, lunchtime and as they left the school at the end of the day. I spoke with pupils informally in class and during their recreation time. I also held a more formal discussion with a group of eight pupils. I examined a range of school

documentation, including that relating to exclusions, attendance, the school's work to provide support for vulnerable pupils and the school's logs of behaviour and bullying. I examined the school development plan. I considered the responses to the school's own surveys of staff, pupils and parents that were undertaken in November 2017. There were insufficient responses to the online survey, Parent View, for these to be considered.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

### **Context**

The school is larger than the average-sized primary school, with 353 pupils currently on roll. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is just above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is below that seen nationally in primary schools.

The school converted to become a sponsored academy with Inspire Multi-Academy Trust on 1 May 2017. There have been significant changes in staffing since your appointment. Sixteen staff have left the school. Over recent months, you have restructured the school's leadership team and made several new appointments. The deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2017. Prior to her appointment, she had been the deputy headteacher at the adjacent Kettering Park Infant School. She now acts as deputy headteacher for both schools. This was a strategic decision between both schools to promote consistency of practice to benefit pupils' experience during their primary school years. You appointed two assistant headteachers. One has since left the school. The current assistant headteacher is responsible for the quality of teaching and learning and the deputy headteacher is responsible for pupils' pastoral development. Since September 2017, you have also appointed a special educational needs coordinator, family support worker and a learning mentor. These members of staff were already working at the school, holding different responsibilities.

The local governing body was disbanded by the trust in February 2017. The trust implemented an interim executive board to oversee the responsibilities of the governors from that time. A new local governing body has recently been formed, with representatives from both the infant and junior schools. Some governors have met this term, to discuss standards, for example. The first meeting to formally appoint a chair and vice-chair and to establish clear working practices is due to take place this week. The interim chair of governors knows the school well. She has a clear understanding of why an interim executive board was required and appreciates the support that the trust have given through appointing a national leader of governance to support and develop governance at this time.

Leaders have ensured that all the appropriate vetting checks take place when a member of staff or volunteer starts to work at the school. At the start of the inspection, there were some minor administrative omissions in the single central record, but these were rectified by the end of the day. You have ensured that staff receive the necessary training in safeguarding. The family support worker has introduced an electronic system to record any concerns about pupils' welfare. You and your leadership team are systematic in your record keeping that relates to safeguarding. You meet fortnightly to discuss any concerns. You meet with staff to share updates regularly so that procedures are well understood by everyone. You and the family support worker draw upon the expertise of external agencies, such as the school nurse and the local police community support officer (PCSO) when this might be helpful to pupils or their families. For example, recently, the PCSO spoke with older pupils about issues relating to the potential dangers of social media.

Every pupil who spoke with me said that they feel safe in school. Levels of supervision on the playground are appropriate and pupils know where to access first aid if they sustain a minor injury. Pupils told me that the arrangements you have introduced for the playground have made them feel safer. For example, the recently introduced equipment and zoning of the playgrounds mean that they can run around and play more safely with balls. They also appreciate the security on the school doors and gates, telling me that adults know who is in school. Pupils told me that bullying and name-calling does sometimes occur, but they agreed they can tell an adult, who will deal with it successfully for them.

You and your new leadership team have reviewed your development planning process. Your priorities include improving the quality of teaching, raising standards and developing pupils' well-being. You and your leadership team have implemented several new strategies, particularly over the past year. You acknowledge that there is work to do to embed the new systems fully across the school. You have already identified that your development planning process does not allow you to record your monitoring and evaluations as sharply as you would like, and you have clear plans to improve this.

The majority of parents who spoke with me, and those who responded to your recent survey, said that the school responds well to concerns and complaints. You have endeavoured to improve communication with parents. Staff are available in the playground with clipboards at the start of the school day to take messages that they pass on to class teachers, for example. Your newsletter informs parents of how they can speak with staff, and post boxes are now available for parents to leave messages for you. Despite this, a significant minority of parents do not feel that communication is as effective as it could be.

An attractive display at the school's entrance highlights the importance of attending school every day and celebrates the rate of attendance in each class. Pupils receive rewards for high rates of attendance, for example book tokens and certificates. The

overall rate of attendance, however, remains just below the national average.

Pupils' physical and mental well-being is high on your agenda. It features as a key priority in your school improvement plan. You have implemented a variety of initiatives since your arrival to address this. Several pupils told me that they have noticed the changes and appreciate them. The learning mentor has introduced a system to track pupils' well-being by consulting with class teachers about, for example, pupils' motivation and their ability to regulate their own behaviour. She analyses this regularly and implements support for pupils who may benefit from it. She has spent time in every class talking to pupils about their aspirations and she works with small groups of pupils in the nest. Pupils in Year 6, for example, have collaborated to make bunting as part of their study of World War II. This will feature in a party at the end of the year. She provides additional support for pupils who have particular needs. She has transformed a disused space under the stairs with a 'Harry Potter' theme. A large floor cushion, thoughtfully decorated walls and soft toys provide pupils with a quiet place to reflect, safe in the knowledge that an adult to talk to will not be far away.

The family support worker provides a good start to the school day for some pupils through the 'larks club'. Situated in the nest, pupils enjoy breakfast at the club and have time to play games together. The nest was officially opened by the mayor of Kettering in November 2017 as part of the school's 'well-being week'. During the week, pupils learned about anti-bullying and pupils from both the infant and junior schools had the chance to play together. All pupils visited the nest to see the new facilities and to plant bulbs in the garden. The nest provides a haven for pupils and their families. It is the venue for the courses you arrange for parents to attend and for parents to have time to talk to staff, or external services, such as the school nurse, in a comfortable environment.

The special educational needs coordinator has improved the methods for ensuring provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. She has a clear understanding of the particular needs of the pupils. She ensures appropriate support is provided and evaluates the effectiveness of the provision with senior staff and with parents.

Pupils generally behave well in classes and around school. The deputy headteacher records incidents of behaviour and analyses the record to identify any trends that may indicate additional support for pupils may be required. As we toured the school together, pupils clearly explained their learning. Teachers provide additional explanations to help pupils grasp the concepts being taught. Pupils are polite to visitors, with several standing aside as you and I walked through the corridors and doorways. At the end of lunchtime, not all pupils respond quickly to the whistle or come in sensibly to lessons. Too many pupils jostle and push in the line or as they come indoors. Although staff are present to supervise, they do not reliably ensure that pupils' transition at this time is orderly and sensible. In contrast, as we watched pupils leave their classrooms at the end of the day with their teachers, this was much calmer and better organised.

## **External support**

The trust has provided some useful training to improve the effectiveness of leadership and management and the quality of teaching through the Inspire Teaching School Alliance. Leaders and teachers have visited other schools to see examples of good practice. The teaching school alliance has arranged for experienced staff from other schools to work alongside your staff to improve their skills. For example, teachers have used the support they have received to improve their planning and to ensure learning intentions are clear to pupils.

The family support worker has accessed useful training, for example, in making early help assessments. The special educational needs coordinator, however, has yet to complete the national qualification for her role. The learning mentor knows what she wants to achieve and has implemented clear approaches, but she has also received limited formal training.

The trust implemented an interim executive board during the time of transition from the previous local governing body to the new one. They have ensured a national lead of governance has worked alongside the school's governors. They have commissioned a review of governance, which is due to take place in the coming months. While some of the school's policies were written at the time of converting to become an academy in May 2017, they have not all been reviewed in line with the trust's stated timescales, nor have they ensured that the school's website is fully compliant. It does not, for example, provide information about the trust and the local governing body.

## **Priorities for further improvement**

- Fully establish the new local governing body, ensuring roles and responsibilities are clear, so that they are able to fulfil their duties with rigour.
- Investigate ways to improve communication with parents.
- Implement procedures to ensure smooth transition between lessons and recreation times for pupils.
- Further develop the skills of leaders at all levels so they are able to fully impact on provision in their areas of responsibility.

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

Yours sincerely

Di Mullan  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**