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Yasmin Chaudhry
Headteacher
Olive School Hackney
66 Cazenove Road
Stoke Newington
London
N16 6AA

Dear Ms Chaudhry

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Olive School Hackney

Following my visit with Russell Bennett, 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

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. Meetings were held with senior leaders, members of the governing body, and groups of staff and parents. Telephone conversations were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and representatives of Hackney Learning Trust. Inspectors made brief visits to all classes and attended an assembly. Inspectors spoke to pupils around school and met more formally with a group of pupils from Year 1. Documents scrutinised included minutes of governing body meetings, reports from external consultants and curriculum planning documentation. The school's audits of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and tackling extremism were scrutinised. Inspectors also looked at the school's cultural calendar.

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

The school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

Context

Olive School Hackney was established under the government's free school programme in September 2013. It is a Muslim faith primary school that is part of the Tauheedul Free Schools Trust. The school is open to both Muslim and non-Muslim pupils. Currently, all pupils on roll are Muslim.

The school is over-subscribed. It is currently smaller than the average primary school, with 90 pupils in Reception and 90 in Year 1. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is well above average. The main groups are Indian, Somali, Bangladeshi and Pakistani. More than two-thirds of the pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is just below average. The proportion of pupils with a disability or special educational need who are supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus, or with a statement of educational need, is also below average.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are polite and courteous. They demonstrate very positive attitudes towards learning and a loyalty to their school. Relationships between and amongst staff and pupils are very positive. Pupils move sensibly and safely around the school and between buildings. They are confident about approaching a member of staff if they are worried about anything. Pupils participate actively in school council meetings, which they describe as, 'helping Ms Chaudhry to change things'.

School leaders promote an ethos of tolerance and respect for people of all faiths, cultures and lifestyles. They have developed objectives for tackling extremism and these are linked carefully to the school's curriculum planning. Governors and school leaders are fully committed to ensuring that as pupils move through the school they develop the characteristics of resilience and tolerance.

Parents are supportive of the school. They praise the consistent way in which behaviour issues are dealt with and say that senior staff are all very approachable. Parents appreciate the opportunity to attend a headteacher's surgery each week to discuss any concerns. One parent said that they chose this school because it was a Muslim faith school but 'what I like is they teach about other religions'.

The school takes every opportunity to encourage good attendance. Attendance is currently average for a primary school. Governors carefully monitor attendance. Senior leaders and governors have acted decisively and appropriately when parents take their children on extended holidays.

The quality of leadership and management of the school

The school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Staff and governors received training covering all the key areas of child protection and safeguarding prior to the school opening in September 2013. This training emphasised that keeping children safe is 'everyone's responsibility'. Staff are clear about the procedures they should follow if they have any concerns. The school makes relevant referrals to the appropriate agencies if significant concerns are raised. These are documented and followed up in a timely and rigorous manner. The executive headteacher is the designated lead within the school for safeguarding and is in school three days each week. The deputy designated lead is appropriately trained but has not received recent update training. School leaders are taking action to ensure this is swiftly addressed.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Leaders ensure that pupils are provided with rich and varied experiences. The school has invited a number of speakers to assemblies. These include a local Rabbi who spoke to pupils about the Jewish festival of Hanukkah, and the deputy headteacher of a local Roman Catholic school who spoke about the festival of Christmas. Pupils have also learnt about festivals from other faiths, and discussed issues such as cruelty to animals. The school has appropriate guidelines for the approval and vetting of speakers. Leaders and governors ensure that the content of any presentation follows the school's clearly stated protocols.

A particularly innovative approach has been the development of a link with a local Jewish primary school. On four days of each week, 12 children from Olive Reception classes join the Reception class of the Jewish school to participate in joint learning and play activities. This work supports the schools' aim of 'improving shared understanding between people of different faiths and no faith'.

Pupils have supported the England World Cup football team and learnt about other countries taking part. They have studied British myths and legends including 'George and the Dragon' and enjoyed watching a performance of 'The Gingerbread Man' presented by a professional theatre group. Pupils performed the story of 'The Three Little Pigs' to an audience of parents and friends.

The school curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils study an appropriate range of subjects. The curriculum prepares pupils for life in modern Britain and examines the lives of kings, queens and prime ministers alongside local history. Pupils enjoy playing instruments and singing, and learn about the works of famous artists. The learning environment is vibrant with colourful displays of pupils' work and photographs celebrating their experiences. Parents are encouraged to become involved in their child's education. They are provided with useful information about how to help their child progress. There are helpful guides on the school's website.

Parents have attended workshops which have included guidance on phonics (the sounds that letters make) and mathematics. One parent said that the workshops had 'helped me to help my daughter'.

The school is committed to providing equal opportunities for all pupils. Boys and girls work well alongside each other and participate enthusiastically in physical education. Learning activities are not gender specific. For example, one boy was observed to be 'ironing' a shirt and could explain why he was doing it. Children from all groups are encouraged to achieve as highly as possible.

Many members of the governing body have been in place since before the school opened. Several parent governors have now been recruited. Governors are keen to recruit members with specific skills and expertise which will support and challenge the school. One spoke of the role of governors being to check the work of school leaders, not to run the school. Governors ask probing questions of leaders in order to challenge them and hold them to account.

External support

The school has developed working partnerships with Hackney Learning Trust. Representatives of the learning trust have visited the school on several occasions. The learning trust has provided advice and support, particularly with respect to the Early Years Foundation Stage. Recent information on pupils' achievement at the end of Reception has been checked by the learning trust and found to be accurate.

Priorities for further improvement

- Leaders should ensure that all the designated persons for safeguarding receive regular and timely updates to their training.

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

Yours sincerely

Gaynor Roberts
Her Majesty's Inspector