2nd March 2017

Mr Abid Butt
Principal
Lyndon School
Daylesford Road
Solihull
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Assessment Date: 21st & 22nd March 2017

Summary

Lyndon School formally joined the Ninestiles Academy Trust on the 1st of September 2015. As an 11-16 establishment with 1245 students, the school serves a varied population from Solihull and Birmingham. The current admissions’ profile shows that students are drawn from approximately 40 primary feeder schools, with a large majority arriving from the neighbouring Local Authority of Birmingham. Prior attainment data for the 2016 cohort shows an APS of 27.4; below national average. This trend is mirrored for the current, Y8, Y9 & Y10. Around a quarter of the students currently in Y9-11 had a reading age of two or more years below their chronological age on entry. Closer analysis shows that the majority arriving with L4 in English and Mathematics are L4c; therefore, core skills, principally numeracy, reading, writing and communication remain a key focus for further improvement.

Main characteristics as shown by RAISE 2015/16:

- The proportion of students that are entitled to FSM is for the first time above national average and stands at 30.5%.

- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups are increasing and currently stand at 31.1%.

- The largest pupil group comprises White British.

- The proportion of students with SEN (including statements) is significantly different to national.

- Deprivation indicator - 0.21 (in line with national).

- The proportion of students arriving within the middle band is increasing whereas the proportion arriving with high prior attainment is decreasing.
The school is very welcoming and in the reception area, the Ninestiles Trust Mission Statement begins to give a flavour of what lies beyond the doors.

“high achieving, innovative and exciting…recognise and respect the richness and diversity of their communities…Outcomes will be outstanding.”

The school’s development plan begins with the following:

“If you want to go fast go alone; if you want to go far go together.”

The inspirational Principal, together with his senior team, have faced challenging circumstances head on and are making excellent progress together for the benefit of the young people who attend Lyndon School. In my discussion with the Principal, he was clear that “all children can succeed” and that “outcomes are non-negotiable”.

The school’s last full inspection by Ofsted in December 2013 produced an overall judgement of inadequate and the school was judged to have ‘serious weaknesses’. The key contributor to this judgement was attainment in some subject areas, particularly science. The report did recognise however that overall attainment at GCSE had improved at a faster rate than other schools in terms of the proportion of pupils attaining 5 A*-C grades including English and Maths.

In the most recent monitoring visit, the HMI concluded that the school is “…making reasonable progress towards the removal of its ‘serious weaknesses’ designation.” In his letter, HMI confirms that the school is now ‘back on track’ and has recognised that since the last visit the school has “accelerated” improvements to continue to strengthen the quality of teaching. HMI also acknowledged that the school’s leadership is “…leaving no stone unturned in addressing longstanding weaknesses across the school, including a determination to engage all staff and students in raising the standards of behaviour, both in lessons and around the school.”

Leadership at all levels is shaped around a set of values and visions determined to create an inclusive school, with a focus on core shared values of raising standards of achievement underpinned by the promotion of the personal development and well-being of all students. There is a focus on ensuring that the curriculum and provision for all students offers a depth and breadth of learning and the curriculum is regularly reviewed. The school has recently committed to achieving the UNICEF UK Rights Respecting School Award.

At Lyndon there is a firm belief that strong and effective leadership is essential in securing their aspiration that every student thrives both academically and socially. The Leadership Team is expected to be emblematic of the school’s values of Trust, Respect and Success and relentless in their pursuit for excellence.

I was impressed with the infectious desire of the Principal and his senior leaders to create a happy, friendly and caring school and the humility with which they lead their school. Leaders set high expectations of students and staff and are ambitious for all students.
The school reception and staff provide a warm, friendly welcome to the school. The school’s motto, Trust, Respect and Success and the Trust’s Mission Statement are visible. There is an electronic signing in system which is user friendly. There is a DDA plan in place.

The building dates back to the 1950s and is beginning to show its age. There is an ongoing, costed programme of refurbishment and decorating to ensure the school environment provides a stimulating and engaging place for all staff and learners. This is currently being re-branded to reflect the work and partnership as part of the Ninestiles Multi Academy Trust.

The provision of IT is good and includes 6 ICT classrooms, a library, 2 halls and a media hub (the SWITCH) which are all accessible before, during and after school time. Further ICT resources are available within curriculum areas for specific needs, for example, iMacs for creativity and design; 4 x class sets of iPads for engagement in teaching & learning; digital cameras for photography. Alpha Smarts and Notebooks are made available to support SEND student learning and exam access arrangements. There are data projectors and Interactive Whiteboards in all classrooms to support engagement in teaching & learning.

There are positive images and displays of inclusive practice through display in classrooms and corridors and on the website and Twitter. The school is making use of, and developing practice with, the Trusts Cloud9, described as a “one stop shop” virtual learning environment for access to resources and a means of communication. I was given the opportunity to see a video presentation of the school’s Local Offer, to my mind, a much more accessible and user friendly version. The video included students talking about their experience at school as well as staff explaining some of the detail of the offer.

One issue raised by members of the Council in my meeting with them concerned the time available for lunch. At just 30 minutes, students felt it was too short given the numbers of staff and students in the school. This was echoed in other meetings with staff and parents.

The staff and students adopt an attitude of respect, tolerance and support for everyone. They understand and recognise the shared values of trust, respect and success and work together to achieve this. All students understand and recognise the expectations regarding behaviour and conduct in lessons and around school. The school holds a clear vision of equality and this is reflected in the common approach from all staff towards praising positive behaviours and working with students to support behaviour using the whole school Behaviour for Learning Policy and the whole school praise system.

In discussion with students, there was an overwhelming opinion that behaviour has improved significantly since the introduction of the Behaviour for Learning system. As one student commented:

“Behaviour has improved tremendously.”
Students are aware of the role of their tutors and Pastoral Managers and how they can access support, advice and guidance if they have any concerns regarding behaviour, bullying and relationships with other students. The school has positive and effective working relationship with ESW who regularly liaises with parents to support positive outcomes for students, the Designated Member of Staff for Child Protection works with vulnerable students to support them during difficult situations at home and will make referral to other agencies appropriate and, where required, signposts relevant support for students and families.

I met with members of the Referral Panel that includes staff responsible for behaviour, welfare, SEND, safeguarding, student advocacy and attendance. This panel meets weekly to look at referrals made by staff through the Cloud9 portal. Every fourth week a review meeting is held to ensure that actions have taken place and have had impact. Students can self-refer through the Student Advocate. This provision, put in place in September 2016, affords an impressive ‘safety-net’ for students and the frequency of the meetings and the range of expertise and experience of the members of the panel helps create a safe environment in which students are very well cared for thrive. Examples of support and a number of case studies were discussed.

Transition arrangements for new students are impressive. For new intake into Y7 there is a comprehensive programme of support which includes a ‘shadowing day’ for all new intake but in groups of 25. This is very costly in terms of staff time and is a clear indication of the importance of this crucial area of the school. In addition, like most schools, there is an induction day when all the new intake visit the school for a day during which they will meet their tutors and experience lesson tasters. With around 40 different feeder primary schools, it is further testament to the value placed upon transition processes that every school is visited at least once by a member of Lyndon School. For students with additional needs, there is a more personalised induction process.

Lyndon encourages students to foster a curiosity for learning and experiences; a wide range of learning experiences are offered both inside and outside of the school. This is reflected in the breadth of extra-curricular and extended curricular activities offered to all students. There was a degree of excitement evident when students told me about the Barcelona Trip they would be attending in the next few weeks.

There is a wide range of trips and residential visits organised throughout the academic year and all students are encouraged to participate and, where required, financial support can be given in hardship situations where a trip is an essential part of the qualification e.g. Geography (field trips). The school promotes and encourages local business links and shared visitors and experiences to build aspirations for students e.g. NG Bailey, Jaguar Land Rover and Solihull BID.

There is a culture of aspiration and future planning for all students in all year groups, this is underpinned by a diverse and forward thinking approach to Information, Advice and Guidance, Tutor development and pastoral care. There is a very long list of provision and
activities for all year groups, examples include visits to local Universities for Y7, Aim Higher Explore your Future visits for Y8, a Business Enterprise Day at Birmingham Childrens Hospital for Y9, for Y10, in addition to work experience there is also a careers’ convention with over 60 employers, colleges, universities and training providers in attendance, and finally, for Y11 one-to-one support from Birmingham Careers Service.

During the two-day assessment, I was able to meet with members of the School Council and a number of Prefects. There is a genuine commitment to hear student voice at Lyndon. For example, the Student Advocate represents the School Council at the Academy Council Meetings although in the next few weeks, the Head Girl and Head Boy will be directly addressing the Academy Council. The School Council meets every fortnight and discusses a range of topics brought to their attention by their peers. In one meeting, the Canteen Manager came to speak to the Council about the quality and range of food available at lunchtimes and break. One improvement made as a result of the discussion was for there to be more healthy food available such as fresh fruit.

Alongside their counterparts in the wider Trust, the School Council attended a conference organised by the Trust and discussed, amongst other things, Rights Respecting Schools Award. The School Council is also about to have access to the Learning Environment Cloud9.

There is a comprehensive programme of Assessment, Recording and Reporting that offers a detailed and regular opportunity to review learner progress and, where required, effectively intervene. Assessments are made twice per year and are consistent with the other two secondary schools in the Trust. There is then moderation across the Trust to ensure accuracy and consistency of judgements. Additionally, within Lyndon, subjects assess more frequently between the formal Trust wide assessments.

In summary, there has been some observable progress from 2015, which gives some evidence to suggest achievement has moved towards ‘requires improvement’. Most qualifications at key stage 4 are statistically in line with thresholds at A*C and an increasing number at A*A. Provisional data suggests that the school made marginal improvements across several headline areas. Initial indications show that performance in English has somewhat limited the school’s performance at 5+ACEM using the new rules.

Achievement in Science has significantly improved in Triple and Double Sciences. The impact of work in this area now means that performance in Triple Science is close or above the national at A*A and A*C. More importantly performance in Double Science has seen significant improvements with A*A performance now in line and A*C performance moving much closer to the national benchmarks. Higher ability students are beginning to perform better and there have been some noticeable improvements in the proportion of students achieving 1A*A, 5A*A and 8A*A qualifications.

In the most recent report from the School Advisor, it was noted that:
“All of the school’s and the Trust’s evidence indicates that learning and progress in books, pupils’ understanding, in-year grades and lessons is predominantly good. School outcomes compare encouragingly to other secondaries in the Trust based on Progress 8 and trends.”

Accelerating the progress of SEND students and closing the gap between students in receipt of pupil premium and their peers remain priorities for the school. Looking ahead to the 2017 results, the Advisor comments that:

“In-year data indicates: some potential improvements in rates of progress and an encouraging drop in the difference between the performance of the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils.”

Internal monitoring processes and supportive visits from local authority leads highlight that teaching and classroom delivery are consistently good. The school’s own monitoring processes have identified that teaching is strongest where lesson delivery and pedagogical practice is adapted to suit the needs of all students with a range of learning styles and needs.

Regular leadership learning walks at both middle and senior leadership level are used to identify key developmental opportunities for staff to ensure a positive impact on outcomes for all groups of students.

Whole staff CPD sessions are mapped against the monitoring cycles outcomes to further support staff development with personalised CPD teamed with subject specific development opportunities. Staff I spoke to were appreciative of the professional development opportunities available and in particular saw great benefit in the Teaching & Learning Nugget every Friday. Staff told me about the regular Teach Meets and also about the Parent Teach Meet on revision techniques to help parents help their children. Two teachers were undertaking professional leadership qualification through the Trust.

Collaborative peer to peer reviews led by the Multi Academy Trust utilised to support and enhance learning opportunities for all students identifying strengths in pedagogy and practice. The school is wise to be using the SLEs from across the Trust to support its staff.

Performance management procedures are robust and are used to drive up standards and identify professional development needs. Comprehensive triangulation of evidence is used to monitor performance which includes lesson observation, learning walks, work scrutiny, data analysis and student voice. Staff are aware of the challenges they face but they are positive about the future of the school and supportive of the drive to secure improvement. They are hardworking, reflective and keen to take advantage of the professional development opportunities available.

The school provides timely and regular feedback to parents via the internal portal system and the Assessment, Reporting and Recording cycle, SEN Review Meetings, LAC Review meetings, PEP meetings, celebration assemblies and personal meetings with Achievement Leaders and Pastoral Managers.
IQM Self-Evaluation Report

To support parental understanding of the current performance, expectations and next steps for their child, opportunities are provided throughout the year for parents and carers to attend Parent Consultation Evenings. This provides a forum for students and parents to speak with all staff and identify areas of strength and areas for development throughout the academic year.

In addition to the Parent Consultation Evenings, the school regularly holds additional Parent Information and Information Evenings offering more in-depth information about the current educational landscape, curriculum changes and methods and techniques for parents to use when supporting their children at home. The school champions opportunities to engage parents in active learning workshops and holds Parent Meet sessions and Exam Preparation sessions to further support the relationship between the school, student and parents.

The successful and well-embedded transition programme includes a range of Primary liaison and transition activities to support the smooth transition from KS2 to KS3. This includes visits by transition staff to local feeder primary schools, home visits for new intake students, coffee mornings for newly enrolled students and parents and transition information evenings.

Parents I spoke to were extremely supportive of the school and two parents of children with ASC spoke about how the school had worked with them as a family to support their child. They were keen to tell me that, despite the size of the school, staff work very hard to ensure that students are known as individuals and cited how the Principal seems to know the name of every student!

Communication was ample and timely via newsletters sent through email or as hardcopy, the website and text messages. One parent commented that “It would be difficult for parents not to know”.

The school is clearly popular with parents given the over-subscription for places at the school. This popularity rests not only in the community closest to the school but extends to areas beyond Solihull and into Birmingham.

Since becoming a part of the Ninestiles Academy Trust, governance has been restructured. The Governance structure is made up of the Members who founded the Trust and the Board of Trustees who are the accountable body for the Trust. Each Academy has its own Academy Council which provides local intelligence to the Board. There are six further sub groups.

All members of the Academy Council are supported with regular opportunities for training and development to ensure they are equipped to offer a high level of support, scrutiny and challenge. The Academy Council for Lyndon School meets regularly with all stakeholders including the wider members of the Multi Academy Trust, Inclusion Team, Leadership Team, parents and students to offer a support, guidance, scrutiny and challenge to ensure
the Principal, staff and students are continually improving and making consistent steps towards good outcomes for all groups of students.

There is a named Academy Councillor for SEND and Inclusion who liaises with the Inclusion teams across the wider Ninestiles Academy Trust to ensure that best practice is consistently applied and supportive measures are effectively deployed within Lyndon School.

The school works with a wide range of external partners and takes note of their views these include; Local Authority Consultants, Educational Psychologists, ESW, Connexions, CAHMs, SENDCo Network and Solihull Sixth Form College.

The Principal regularly meets with the School Improvement Partner to discuss Inclusion and the progress of students from all groups. These meetings include a comprehensive review of all strands of the inspection framework.

The development of the Ninestiles Academy Trust partnership has offered further opportunities to develop external links with a wide range of business partners; these include, Jaguar Land Rover, Birmingham City University, McCann Erickson, NG Bailey, Life Ready, Solihull BID and Rover.

The Academy Councillors are very effective and fully aware of their responsibilities and the context of the school and its community. During discussion, it was clear that Councillors hold leaders to account and are robust in their pursuance of improved standards. It was also evident, that they are extremely supportive and do all they can to resource the ambitions of leaders. Councillors I spoke to were eloquent in their articulation of a compelling vision for inclusion. They take an active role in the life of the school. There is a good breadth and wealth of experience and skill present amongst members of the Council.

The school values and recognises the importance of supporting, working with and learning from the wider community of Lyndon School. It is a core aspect of the whole school ethos of developing the whole child through exposure to a breadth of learning and community based opportunities to enhance student understanding of the role they play in the community of the school and the wider local community.

The school offers a multitude of guidance and support to their students in areas such as transition from Lyndon to apprenticeships and further education. This includes work experience, visiting speakers from commerce, industry and local further education colleges, practising interview techniques with local employers and visiting Apprenticeship and Careers’ Events. They have strong, established links with a range of local employers including Jaguar Land Rover, John Lewis Partnership, Solihull and McCann, Birmingham as well as a range of further education providers such as The Sixth Form College Solihull, Solihull College and Birmingham University. These positive relationship and opportunities have been created through the school’s work with the Solihull Music Services and the CBSO, the cross curricular learning experiences provided through the Comenius Programme and the charitable learning work carried out across the school.
I am of the opinion that the school fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark. I recommend that the school be awarded the Mark and be reassessed in 3 years’ time.

Assessor: Barry Carney

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:

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Joe McCann MBA NPQH
Director of Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd
Element 1 – The Inclusion Values and Practices of the School

Strengths:

Inclusion is central to the school’s vision and purpose and this sets the framework in which all work takes place in this warm and welcoming school.

There is a strong sense of common purpose and commitment among all staff, who have students’ best interests at heart and are prepared to work very hard to meet their needs.

The leadership of the Principal, the senior leaders and SEND Leader ensures that all children are fully supported to attain to their full potential.

Excellent transition practices are in place for students entering the school, for students transferring from year to year and for those transferring to secondary schools and to post 16 provision.

There is a consistent approach to behaviour management resulting in improving standards of learning behaviour throughout the school.

There is a thorough system of data analysis and meetings with parents which ensure that all pupils’ needs are identified and that any pupils who are not progressing as expected are highlighted and targeted for appropriate interventions.

The needs of pupils on pupil premium are carefully tracked. The school is very sensitive in supporting the pupils who qualify for this funding as well as for all vulnerable pupils.

Areas for development:

Explore opportunities to develop further the already excellent careers’ information, advice and guidance and toward this end, investigate the potential of the Inspiring IAG award which would be a fitting recognition and celebration of the provision.
Element 2 – The Learning Environment, Resources and ICT

Strengths:

The school's very welcoming reception area and reception staff provide very positive first contact for all visitors.

The school website is clear and very informative including all the required policies and information. The ethos of inclusivity is reflected through the content.

There are positive displays around the school reflecting its mission and ethos as well as displays of students' work promoting and celebrating students' achievements.

Effective work has been undertaken to promote e-safety.

Good use is made of the IT provision in classrooms and in central resources such as ‘The Switch’.

Areas for development:

Ensure that more opportunities are taken to promote the school's inclusive ethos and the achievements of students through increasing the amount of display around all areas of the school.
Element 3 - Learning Attitudes, Values and Personal Development

Strengths:

Students are very clear on what is expected of them and they feel very well supported by it. There is a very positive, happy atmosphere in the school and there is mutual respect between staff and students.

Pastoral support and safeguarding arrangements are extremely thorough and ensure that all children’s needs are catered for and that children are supported through any difficulties they may face.

Attendance and punctuality are good and improving and there is a clear focus upon improving both still further.

The school works very hard to create an environment where everyone can learn in an atmosphere of mutual support and respect.

The school culture includes a strong commitment to student voice. Opportunities for students to take on responsibilities include the school council, head boy and head girl and school prefects. A member of the senior leadership team is also the ‘Student Advocate’ and ensures that their ‘voice’ is heard at that level.

There is a wide range of extracurricular activities and clubs, which are very well attended by students. There are a variety of school trips, linked to the curriculum as well as those for rewards, which students are very pleased to attend.

Areas for development:

Use the wealth of data available to analyse the participation in extra-curricular, trips and visits of vulnerable groups including those in receipt of the Pupil Premium and subsequently seek to widen participation as appropriate.

As senior leaders are already aware, there is some concern from students, parents and staff that the length of lunchtime is too short. The school should review arrangements in response to these concerns.
Element 4 - Learner Progress and the Impact on Learning

**Strengths:**

Excellent transition arrangements are in place for children, including liaison with families of children before joining Year 7. Transition between years is also excellent as it is post 16.

The use of data, tracking and monitoring systems are good and lead to effective interventions.

CPD for staff is an important feature and staff meetings include training and development for staff as well as sharing good practice opportunities.

There are good arrangements in place across the Trust to moderate assessments.

There have been significant improvements in performance recently, in particular in science.

The school is self-reflective and aware of the need to continue its efforts to make significant improvements in some areas. The school is open to scrutiny in its attempts to move forward.

**Areas for development:**

Consideration should be given to affording Teaching Assistants and Teachers the time to collaborate more frequently so that planning is more proactive and timely and therefore accelerates the progress of students.
Element 5 - Learning and Teaching (Monitoring)

Strengths:

The school is thorough in monitoring all aspects of learning and teaching, to ensure a high degree of consistency of standards and approaches across the school.

CPD for staff is very thorough and includes sharing of good practice opportunities, which staff find very helpful.

Formal lesson observations take place by SLT and middle leaders and provide support to teachers to enable them to improve their practice where necessary.

Performance management is thorough and robust.

Senior leaders have a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the staff team. Performance Management is supportive but also sets clear targets. Senior leaders know what to do to move every member of the team forward.

Areas for development:

There are no significant areas for development.
Element 6 – Parents, Carers and Guardians

Strengths:

Parents' views are taken very seriously, so that they are able to effect changes in the school. Frequent parent surveys are analysed and the results and further action are published and followed-through.

Parents spoken to were very positive about the school's supportive and caring ethos. They value the attention the school gives to the individual needs of their children. They find communication with the school is excellent and the teachers are very approachable, enabling them to see a teacher when they need to.

Parents also mentioned the sensitive way in which the school meets the individual needs of all children, including those with emotional needs and those with SEND.

There is excellent communication with parents, which is enhanced by the welcoming, open ethos of the school. Any concerns expressed by parents/carers are acted upon swiftly and sensitively. The school goes out of its way to meet parents' needs.

Areas for development:

The school should look to establish a Parent Forum and could investigate the framework offered by the Leading Parent Partnership award and, if it is felt appropriate, should engage with the programme.
Element 7 - Governing Body and Management

Strengths:-

The Governing Body (Academy Council) is very involved in the life of the school: they provide appropriate support and challenge to the school and share its inclusive values and high aspirations for all pupils.

Governors (Academy Councillors) have high praise for the school and its work. Councillors spoken to were very proud of the school’s inclusive values and excellent, supportive work with children and their families.

Councillors work effectively with each governor having a specific area of responsibility on which to report to the whole team. They attend training for governors and seek support from external agencies.

The councillors feel able to support the school and are capable of challenge and being a ‘critical friend’, when necessary and appropriate. They are fully supportive of the school and the continuing drive to maintain high standards and improve further.

Councillors are vigilant regarding safeguarding, recognising its importance and regularly reviewing practice.

Areas for development:-

There are no significant areas for development.
Element 8 - The School in the Community

**Strengths:**

Pupils participate in a variety of clubs and after school activities and participate in a range of school trips to enhance their learning.

Strong and effective partnerships exist with local business and further and higher education organisations through which the curriculum is enriched.

There are excellent opportunities afforded through the Trust for collaboration between local schools that is adding capacity at Lyndon School.

There is a good range of charitable and fundraising activities that take place.

**Areas for development:**

There are no significant areas for development.