

Lantern of Knowledge Schools Statement on Umar Haque

The Trustees, Governors and Staff of Lantern of Knowledge School were shocked when Umar Haque was arrested, and struck with horror to subsequently learn of his activities. Our Trust and School takes extremism very seriously. We work tirelessly to develop our pupils into rounded, upstanding and inclusive British-citizens who make positive contributions to society – Indeed, our endeavours and educational standards over many years speak for themselves.

We would like to emphasise that we treat the safety and welfare of our pupils with the utmost importance, regularly reviewing our policies and procedures around the recruitment of staff to ensure they are robust and legally compliant. Those involved in the recruitment of staff also undergo training to ensure statutory requirements are adhered to – This is the only such isolated incident at our School since it opened in 2006.

Umar Haque was employed as a part-time teacher and supervisor from April 2015, in a relatively minor role. He taught a class of 18 pupils. He left the school voluntarily for personal reasons in January 2016. He did not return to the School after this point.

He was subject to our safer recruitment procedures in accordance with statutory safeguarding guidance issued by the Department for Education. The School has followed all guidance and legal requirements for the safer recruitment of staff and safeguarding of children – Ofsted have judged that these procedures are effective.

Whilst at our school there was no indication or signs of any extremist activity or attitude in Mr Haque's performance, observations or meetings, nor were any complaints made by other staff, children or parents during his employment. The School works closely with the local Prevent team. Concerns about Mr Haque were first raised by Police a year after he left. We reiterate that we were not made aware of any extremism concerns about Mr Haque by the Prevent team or the Police whilst he was employed at our School.

We have co-operated fully with all authorities investigating Mr. Haque sharing information with Police, Local Authority Social Services, Department for Education, Ofsted and The Charity Commission - and we will continue to do so. Access was given to the Police to enable interviews of pupils to take place and for statements to be taken.

We followed our own internal safeguarding procedures to investigate the allegations that had been made once raised by the Police and liaised with parents and pupils to ensure that their

safety and welfare had not been compromised. It is noteworthy that there was only one charge Mr Haque was accused of in court which related to his time at our school for which the jury could not come to a judgement and hence he was found not guilty of it. The remaining charges he was found guilty of have no connection with our school at all.

We are not aware of when the Police or security services initially became aware of Mr. Haque's activities.

We denounce any form of radicalisation and would have been swift to notify the Police and Prevent team if any had come to the School's attention during or after Mr Haque's employment.

END

Friday, 02nd Day of March 2018.