

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



12 October 2010

Mr C Beckett
The Deepings School
Park Road
Deeping St James
Peterborough
Cambridgeshire
PE6 8NF

Dear Mr Beckett

Ofsted 2010–11 good practice survey: safeguarding in schools

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and students, during my visit on 29 September 2010 to look at work in safeguarding.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our publication about good practice in safeguarding in schools. The publication will include case studies about individual schools. If The Deepings School is included as a case study, you will have an opportunity to comment before publication. Individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

Features of good practice

- The school's strong commitment to safeguarding is shared by staff and governors. As a result, a culture of care prevails and permeates the school so that students feel safe and well cared for. Students say that staff are approachable and that there is always someone to talk to if they have any problems. They state clearly that if they have any concerns they will be dealt with.
- The strong commitment to pastoral care is reflected in the staffing structure and responsibilities held by senior members of staff. One of the two deputy headteachers has responsibility for the pastoral support systems that are in place and he is supported well by an effective and committed team. Responsibilities for the different aspects of safeguarding are very clear. All staff know what is expected of them and how their work contributes to safeguarding. Arrangements for vetting staff, volunteers and contractors are thorough.
- Day-to-day routines are managed very well. For example, timetabled pastoral duties ensure that staff have clear roles and responsibilities throughout the day. From the moment that students enter the school each morning, they state that they are helped to feel safe because senior staff

undertake 'meet and greet roles' at each of the main entrances. Breaks and lunchtimes, similarly, have clear roles. Where students are less comfortable mixing with others in a whole-school setting at break times, they have the option of attending 'Breakers'. Here, supervised by staff, they are able to remain inside and socialise with a smaller group of their peers. Risk assessments ensure that the site and daily routines are as safe as possible and specialist provision, such as science laboratories and the swimming pool, have their own clear health and safety policies and risk assessments.

- The arrangements for transition are highlighted by students as one of the reasons that they settle so very quickly and feel safe. They stated that they valued the well-established practice of two transition days for Year 7 students to be introduced to the school. This is before the other year groups begin the academic year and includes a fire practice. They reflected that only having Year 7 on site helped them to get to know the buildings and its rooms without getting lost. The arrangements to provide some students with additional opportunities to visit the school are valued as is the introduction of a longer period of transition for the 'gold' group'. These students have a greater level of support throughout their first year at the school and receive teaching in their 'home base' as well as introducing them to some of the specialist provision. This is greatly helping these students to settle and continue their learning.
- Exceptionally effective pastoral support systems are in place. The identification of vulnerable students is understood well by all staff. Procedures and practices set out in the school's 'intervention policy' identify four levels of need. This looks at a range of indicators connected to the 'Every Child Matters' outcomes, such as academic performance, levels of fitness and eating habits. This is used effectively to target support, such as mentoring by the deputy heads or heads of house.
- The critical incident plan is understood well and provides a model of best practice in this area. In the event of any form of critical incident, it provides a clear framework to support the school in planning and carrying out immediate actions, managing its response and returning to normality. Roles and responsibilities are clear as are arrangements for partial or full evacuation of the premises.
- The arrangements and planning for making educational visits as safe as possible are a model of good practice. A dedicated 'visits coordinator' follows agreed local authority procedures and ensures very thoroughly that risk assessments are carried out before any visit and appropriate controls put in place. Both students and their parents are made aware of the school's expectations of students on such visits. There are clear systems in place for emergency contact during visits.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop safeguarding in the school.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection.

Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Amraz Ali
Her Majesty's Inspector