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Ms Janet Atkinson
Headteacher
The Deanes school
Daws Heath Road
Thundersley
SS7 2TD

Dear Ms Atkinson

No formal designation monitoring inspection of The Deanes School

Following my visit to The Deanes School on 26 April 2013, 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 no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because the Chief Inspector was concerned about the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements at the school.

I sought to establish whether:

- safeguarding procedures are adequate, including the response to bullying
- supervision is appropriate to keep pupils safe in lessons and at break times during the school day
- there is thorough recording and follow up to any incidents that occur
- staff are suitably trained and able to seek advice and support when required
- leaders and the governing body are effective in monitoring and evaluating policy and practice for behaviour management and safeguarding within the school.

Evidence

I scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements, including the behaviour and bullying records. I observed behaviour and learning across a range of lessons and met staff, pupils and the governor responsible for safeguarding. I also scrutinised attendance records, minutes of the governing body and the personal and citizenship education programme including the very recent internal review of the quality of teaching and

effectiveness of this area of the curriculum. I took into account the 20 responses made to parent view.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:
The school's safeguarding procedures and policies meet requirements.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students understand the school's expectations of respecting others and their differences. In the lessons observed behaviour was good and teachers ensured work was interesting and at the right level of challenge. Students were appreciative of the additional support in English and mathematics and this helped them feel more confident. Most students behave well and show respect for each other and the school. A small proportion of students find this more difficult than others but the effective support they receive helps them to improve their behaviour and how they treat others. Students report that there has been an increase in the rigour of school rules recently and staff are more consistent in applying the rules. Very recently, a new rule has been introduced to prevent the use of mobile phones during the school day and most students agree this is an improvement.

Students feel safe and all those spoken to believe staff will help them with any issues or difficulties they may be facing. For many students the heads of houses offer important support and for others it is their form tutor. Break and lunch times are well supervised with particular emphasis on more hidden areas of the school grounds. There are very short delays before staff are in place in some areas of the grounds, usually because they have been teaching elsewhere during the lesson prior to the break.

The school have a high proportion of pupils who have started midway through an academic year and in years other than Year 7. There is a well-established programme to help these pupils settle and become part of the school community, which is usually successful.

Some pupils have experienced others being unkind to them and a few reported that bullying has occurred in the past but this has always been dealt with by staff and the bullying has stopped. Students who find behaving in line with school expectations difficult are given the support they require and usually their behaviour improves. Behaviour is carefully tracked and support is adjusted according to their needs. As part of carefully designed programmes students can access a good range of support from staff including working with trained counsellors.

Students learn about diversity and their rights and responsibilities. There are specific taught programmes about anti-bullying including accepting and treating people's differences with respect. The programme does not cover some aspects with younger students and yet they are aware of some of the issues. The programme has been taught by a large group of teachers and the school's self-review has rightly identified that this group needs to be smaller to help ensure all staff involved are sufficiently

well informed and skilled at teaching these areas. The usual school programme is supplemented by specific projects about anti-bullying that focus on different aspects, including for example, understanding disability and accepting differences in sexuality. While these help to address any issues that occur they are not routinely revisited.

The quality of leadership in, and management of, the school

Staff and governors are aware of their duties to safeguard students. They are well trained and diligently record any issues that a student may be facing. This helps to keep a dialogue open with the students and enables careful monitoring of practice by senior staff. Incidents are dealt with appropriately and record keeping is very thorough. Heads of house or the deputy headteacher follow up any incidents that have occurred and record the actions taken. They then evaluate how well actions have worked to prevent any repeat or similar behaviour. They make changes if they find the approaches are not working.

The deputy headteacher has an overview of students' behaviour which is supported by the recording kept by heads of house and the regular meetings of the staff behaviour forum. There is careful monitoring of all types of behaviour and the effectiveness of actions taken, including analysis by different groups of pupils. Rewards and sanctions are usually applied consistently. Senior staff give effective support to other staff where it is needed. They are aware that students think some supply (short term temporary) staff are not able to manage behaviour as well as the other teachers and the senior team put in higher levels of support and supervision where this is the case.

The school has a comprehensive array of policies that clearly set out actions to help keep pupils safe including the prevention of bullying and what actions will be taken if bullying or other behaviour and safeguarding issues occur. The governors receive thorough safeguarding reports about practice in the school which include issues to do with students' behaviour. The governor with responsibility for safeguarding is well trained and aware of her responsibilities. She effectively monitors and evaluates safeguarding practice and policy. Regular monitoring of the effectiveness of practice informs the review of policies and the school improvement plan.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure staff allocated to supervise areas of the school grounds are able to reach their position quickly at break times.
- In the forthcoming changes to teaching personal and citizenship education make sure links are made with local primary schools so that all aspects are covered regularly and when appropriate to the age and awareness of the pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Janet Thompson

Her Majesty's Inspector