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4 July 2013

Mr Michael Byron
Headteacher
Moatbridge School
Eltham Palace Road
Eltham
London
SE9 5LX

Dear Mr Byron

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Moatbridge School

Following my visit with Carmen Rodney, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 3 July 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 school was given no notice of the inspection. The inspection was carried out because the Chief Inspector was concerned about the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements at Moatbridge School.

Evidence

Ofsted have reviewed three complaints which raised concerns about the inappropriate use of restraint by school staff. Having carried out a wide range of evidence-gathering activities, the inspection team found no evidence to corroborate such concerns.

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. Meetings were held with you, members of staff, the Chair and a member of the Governing Body, two officers from the local authority's educational welfare service and a senior representative of the local authority. Inspectors observed lessons, social times and movements around the school site, in order to assess the use of the school's behaviour policy. Conversations were carried out throughout the day with individual students and groups. The opinions of staff were gathered using an inspection questionnaire. The views of parents and carers were taken into consideration through a recent school-based

survey, along with comments recorded within formal meeting notes, letters and students' files.

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

The school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

Context

Moatbridge School is a small school currently attended by 33 boys who have statements of special educational needs relating to behavioural, emotional, and social difficulties. Some have additional educational needs including speech and language difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). A few students are looked after by the local authority. There are currently no students who are subject to child protection plans. An above-average number of students are known to be eligible for the additional government funding known as the pupil premium. Most students are from White British backgrounds. A small minority come from other ethnic groups but none speaks English as an additional language.

Staffing at the school has been stable, with senior leaders having taught at the school for some time. The deputy headteacher is retiring at the end of this term and an existing member of staff has been promoted to fill the post on a temporary basis. A newly qualified teacher has been appointed to start in September. A further teacher has resigned and a replacement is still to be recruited for next term.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The school operates a behaviour policy that encourages students to accept responsibility for their own actions. A points system that rewards good behaviour in lessons and during social times helps them to recognise and discuss their progress with staff on a daily basis. When poor behaviour interrupts learning, students are escorted to an isolation room until they are calm enough to return to lessons. Staff are skilled at de-escalating such incidents of challenging behaviour and the use of isolation is carefully monitored. Restraint, in line with the school's policy, is only carried out if all other interventions have failed and the safety of others is at risk. Students and staff say that such incidents are rare. This view is supported by the low number of incidents recorded in the school's log. The school is arranging for further restraint training for staff to take place as soon as possible.

Students are positive about the school and the support they get there. They speak highly about the quality of care, guidance and support provided. Individual students acknowledge how much the school and its staff have helped them to address their behaviours so that they can focus on their education. This was evident in a food technology lesson when students wore appropriate head coverings, used equipment

safely and carefully followed all instructions. As a result, they made good progress towards their behaviour and learning targets in that lesson.

Students say that they feel safe and that relationships with staff are usually good. They are clear about the school's systems for managing poor behaviour and feel that they are supported to achieve individual targets.

Most students' attendance improves from low starting points because of the high levels of support provided by the school. When attendance is a concern, it is challenged quickly and further support is sought from other professionals.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Inspectors were fully satisfied that effective arrangements are in place for safeguarding students. The complaints referred to Ofsted at the end of 2012 have been investigated by the governing body and the local authority. In all cases, it was established that there was no evidence to corroborate any of the concerns raised. Evidence gathered in this inspection agrees with these findings. No further complaints have been received.

Staff are clear about their responsibilities in relation to overseeing the well-being of students and on all matters linked to safeguarding. Effective systems for ensuring the safety and well-being of very vulnerable students are in place. This includes support for those who are the responsibility of the local authority or who are supported through a child protection plan. The school works closely with a wide range of other professionals to ensure that information is shared and concerns followed up. Appropriate checks are made when recruiting new staff. School leaders hold teachers to account for meeting national teaching standards and follow the guidance provided by the local authority human resources department. All required policies are in place and are kept under regular review by the governing body. Governors understand their own responsibilities and monitor the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures.

Leaders are highly visible throughout the school day and lead by example. Staff feel supported. They say that they are well led and that behaviour in the school is consistently well managed. Systems are in place to monitor behaviour and deal with concerns quickly. The school carefully tracks the attendance, behaviour and achievements of individual students on a daily basis. Although this provides immediate information for staff to discuss with students, it does not yet link efficiently to other information within the school. The school has correctly identified that improvements in its systems for gathering, sharing and analysing information could be made. The school action plan recognises that there is still more to do to reduce exclusions. A minority of students are sometimes excluded too frequently while other interventions are arranged to address very challenging behaviours. The provision of an on-site exclusion room is planned to allow further support to be provided.

The curriculum offers opportunities to promote safeguarding topics within personal, social and health education lessons and through the extensive range of extra-curricular activities that are offered to all students. For example, the school hosts a weekly drop-in clinic to help students stop smoking and adopt healthy lifestyles. Parents' and carers' views are mostly positive. Regular contact is maintained by the school so that any concerns can be discussed and addressed together whenever possible. Parents and carers appreciate the school's approach to creating a learning environment which is safe and meets the needs of their children.

External support

The local authority has provided regular advice, support and guidance to the school. Advisers are currently providing support to leaders to improve school information systems and develop further strategies for raising achievement. Regular support from the educational welfare service has led to improved rates of attendance and support for students who are persistently absent. Educational psychologists, speech, language and communication therapists, and literacy teachers have been used to support students needing specialist interventions.

The school has well-established links with a wide range of services and works with multi-agency groups to support the complex needs of many students, some of whom adopt unsafe behaviours.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that further restraint training for all staff takes place so that interventions requiring restraint are carried out in a safe manner and avoided whenever possible through the use of de-escalation techniques.
- Ensure that exclusions are reduced further by providing additional support and interventions that can be offered on-site to students by school staff.
- Align information recording systems to ensure that all student information, including behaviour tracking, risk assessments and special educational needs information, is centrally collated and accessible for analysis.

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

Yours sincerely

Lesley Cox
Her Majesty's Inspector