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22 October 2013

Mrs Nic Gordon
Headteacher
Avishayes Community Primary School
Fairway Rise
Chard
TA20 1NS

Dear Mrs Gordon

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Avishayes Community Primary School

Following my visit with Robert Pyner, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on Tuesday 22 October 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.

Evidence

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record used to summarise the checks that are carried out when staff are employed at the school. Other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements were examined, including an annual safeguarding audit, the school's development plan, policies relating to safeguarding, governors' minutes, curriculum plans, management and staff-meeting minutes. Inspectors analysed parental responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own staff and pupil questionnaires. Attendance and exclusion data were analysed. A telephone call was held with a representative from the local authority. Meetings were held with: the headteacher, a group of pupils, parents, the Chair of the Governing Body, the governor responsible for safeguarding, members of the senior leadership team, teaching assistants and lunchtime supervisors. Inspectors undertook a series of short visits across the school to look at the behaviour and safety of pupils in all classes, at break and lunchtime. A site survey was also conducted.

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

The school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

Context

Avishayes is an average-sized primary school with a higher-than-average turnover of pupils. The school became an academy in September 2011. The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families) is close to the national average. Most pupils are White British but almost one in ten pupils are from a range of minority ethnic groups, mainly from Other White backgrounds. A similar proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average. Staff turnover has been low.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are educated in a safe and orderly community. Parents are confident that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the school is a safe and happy environment for their children. Those pupils interviewed by inspectors showed a sound understanding of what it means to feel safe and act safely as they move around school. Some pupils demonstrate well-established manners and are spontaneously polite, saying 'thank you' to inspectors for holding doors open or when passing out questionnaires. These pupils model positive behaviour well for the whole school community. Inspection observations show that pupils are generally engaged in their learning and work appropriately in lessons. Younger children in Reception develop secure relationships with adults and peers early. Independence is encouraged and fostered effectively, such as when changing for PE lessons. Home visits and close links with the nursery enable early identification of any concerns. These procedures, combined with sophisticated analysis to identify multiple barriers to learning, including any safeguarding issues, help the school to match provision to pupils' needs quickly. Older pupils show good examples of fulfilling the school's aims and values of 'respect and responsibility' through their work as play leaders, information and communication technology (ICT) monitors and by contributing to the school council. Effective links with the local secondary school, which start early in Year 6, are enabling pupils to transfer smoothly to the next phase of their education.

Pupils reported that they enjoy school and the large majority believe that if an adult is informed of any bullying issues that arise, problems will stop. All staff know all pupils well and are visible before and after the school day, as well as at break and lunchtimes. Staff provide secure support for pupils as they move around the school site. Where teaching is effective and expectations high, pupils respond well, making

good progress in their learning. Where teaching lacks stimulus and pace, pupils' attitudes to learning are not as positive.

Pupils' attendance shows some early signs of improvement this term compared with previous years. This is due to the introduction of attendance certificates and partnership working with health agencies. However, attendance still remains low when compared to national annual figures. The quality of work undertaken by the school to provide for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable has resulted in a dramatic reduction in rates of pupils' exclusions. The nurture group, art therapy, forest school activities and the 'listening ear' support are effective in meeting the needs of these pupils.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Leaders, managers and governors demonstrate a clear understanding of safeguarding and ensure it is given a high profile across the school. Partnership working, including the sharing of information with outside agencies, is well established. Training for all staff is up to date and ensures that signs and symptoms of concerns are identified quickly. There are clear procedures so that staff can report concerns to the designated person. All staff know these procedures and how to seek specific guidance and advice. There are very simple and well-thought-out lines of communication within the school to ensure that, if safeguarding issues arise, information can be shared with appropriate staff quickly. School policies for child protection and e-safety provide clear, uncomplicated guidance, are practical and have a well-established cycle for review.

A number of curriculum initiatives across the school enable pupils to learn about safety and keeping safe. The e-safety curriculum is a strength. It is tailored to the appropriate age and phase of pupils' education and helps ensure pupils know how to keep safe online. A dedicated e-safety week helps pupils know how to report concerns and what information they should not share online. Imaginative and innovative ways to engage parents in this area have helped pupils understand how to remain safe when using the internet at home or on mobile devices. Assemblies cover key safety values and themes which are, in turn, picked up by the school council. Participation in anti-bullying week activities enhances how pupils should treat each other. Risk assessments are clear, maintained well and of good quality. The range of risks covered is comprehensive and includes leading educational visits, curriculum subject areas and individualised personal assessments for pupils who might be at risk of exclusion. This approach is also adopted for personal plans such as intimate care or positive handling, as well emergency evacuation plans for those pupils with physical needs. Even though the school site is large, appropriate systems are in place to ensure pupils' movement around the premises is safe.

Governors are aware of the importance of safeguarding. The annual report presented by the school provides them with relevant information on safeguarding incidents and procedures. Although the governor with responsibility for safeguarding meets regularly with the headteacher, these appointments are yet to include the

systematic monitoring of the school's single central record. The Chair of the Governing Body has undertaken relevant training in the past but recognises that additional training for more governors is needed, especially with the pending departure of the headteacher.

External support

The school works well with local partners, including other local schools. Regular meetings with the local authority safeguarding officer and police and health representatives provide a cohesive level of support for pupils within the local community. The school receives appropriate specific advice and support from social care professionals at case conference meetings to enable pupils to overcome personal difficulties. Close working relationships have been established with general practitioner surgeries to share relevant medical information. This has been successful in improving pupils' attendance at school.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that governing body monitoring activities to check the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements include a review of the single central record each term by a named governor.
- Ensure that more members of the governing body and staff have undertaken safeguarding and safer recruitment training.
- Rigorously monitor pupils' attendance and take prompt action where this falls below the national average.

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

Yours sincerely

Richard Light
Her Majesty's Inspector