

## PROTECT-INSPECTION



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Robert Campbell  
Principal  
Impington Village College  
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Impington  
Cambridge  
Cambridgeshire  
CB4 9LX

Dear Mr Campbell

### **No formal designation monitoring inspection of Impington Village College**

Following my visit to your academy on 5 March 2014, 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 unannounced and was carried out following a number of complaints made to Ofsted which raised serious concerns. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector decided that an inspection of the academy should take place to follow up the whole-academy issues that were raised. The inspection sought to establish:

- whether safeguarding procedures meet requirements, including the responses to students presenting challenging behaviour
- whether leaders and managers are effective in monitoring and evaluating policy and practice for behaviour management and safeguarding within the academy.

### **Evidence**

I scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding students. I met with you and we toured the academy during lesson times and breaktimes. We looked at records of complaints and appointments of staff. I met with the Acting Assistant Principal with responsibility for discipline and other staff responsible for responding to child protection concerns. Together we looked at how the academy tracks incidents of inappropriate behaviour, parents' views on the academy's work and how child protection issues are recorded and addressed. I met with the Chair of the Governing Body and four groups of students.

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

The academy's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

## **Context**

There are 1414 students on roll. Proportions of students from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language are slightly higher than those found nationally, reflecting the international nature of the sixth form in particular. The proportion of students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is half the national average. Slightly higher than average proportions of students are supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational need.

The academy's most recent Ofsted inspection was in May 2012. At that time, its overall effectiveness was judged as good and the behaviour and safety of students as outstanding.

A Vice-Principal and an Assistant Principal left at the end of the autumn term following long-term absence. From September 2013, two new Assistant Principals joined the leadership team, and one of these became Acting Vice-Principal from January 2014. Another Acting Assistant Principal was appointed in October 2013.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Students' behaviour observed during this inspection in lessons and around the site was orderly, calm and purposeful. The academy's behaviour records, and the views of parents and students suggest that this is typical of what happens normally. There are some occasions when individual students in a few lessons behave inappropriately, mainly creating low-level disruption such as calling out or not getting on with work as well as they can. The students that spoke to me say that students' individual differences are respected, such as for ethnicity, sexuality or ability. Students report some instances of swearing. They say that this is not usually derogatory language and is mostly said in the heat of the moment. Nonetheless, the academy is currently holding a firm stance on students who swear excessively and this accounts for a recent rise in temporary exclusions. Records relating specifically to bullying show that students are most concerned about unkindness when they fall out with their friends.

Students are not overly supervised because they generally behave as expected. There are clear guidelines for expected behaviour. Students know what the sanctions are for misbehaving. However, they say that sanctions are not applied consistently or fairly by all staff, and this accords with the findings of senior leaders. The Acting Assistant Principal with responsibility for discipline is working on this

already by revising the arrangements for detentions and the way that incidents are tracked, and has identified that some groups of students receive a disproportionate amount of sanctions. You are also looking into changes to the responsibilities of faculty leaders in following up inappropriate behaviour.

Robust arrangements are in place to protect students when concerns are raised about their well-being. Arrangements are particularly strong in making sure that actions are taken quickly and methodically. There are several staff trained as designated officers for child protection, although their respective roles and responsibilities are very clearly defined so that staff know who to go to with immediate concerns. Records are well-kept and show how concerns are addressed. You and the Acting Assistant Principal with responsibility for discipline set up weekly Safe@IVC meetings. These meetings, together with clear written records of what is discussed and agreed, work well to make sure that appropriate action is taken for individual students, and to keep senior leaders well-informed.

### **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

Issues raised in the complaints that led to this inspection have been taken very seriously by senior leaders and the governing body. They quickly identified, and accepted, where there were weaknesses in practice and procedures. Appropriate action has been taken. For example, responsibilities between senior leaders have been revised so that accountabilities, particularly for safeguarding students, are clear and more widely shared. In addition, you and the Acting Assistant Principal with responsibility for discipline have trained recently as designated child protection officers to supplement the work of those already trained, and to keep yourselves well-informed of current good practice. Areas where further action is needed are still being discussed. Arrangements for appointing staff are suitable in respect of checks for staff's suitability to work with children, and records of applications and interviews are thorough. However, policy guidelines for recruiting staff are not formally written down. This means that procedures are not robust enough to make sure that all relevant issues have been considered, such as ensuring impartiality and equality when considering internal candidates or candidates who have personal connections with existing members of staff.

The policy for managing students' behaviour is unwieldy and currently being revised. The policy for safeguarding students is out-of-date and is generic rather than specific about what happens at this academy according to what is relevant to the current needs and circumstances of your particular students. Suitable policies are in place for making complaints about the academy's work, including a policy for whistleblowing. Records sampled during this inspection show that the complaints policy is followed properly and that records are detailed and extensive in response to the issues raised.

The governing body plays a strong role in holding senior leaders to account. The governor responsible for overseeing the academy's arrangements for safeguarding students is well-informed and well-experienced for the role. The governor checks

that the single central record of checks on staff is accurate and up-to-date, and meets formally with the new Acting Assistant Principal with responsibility for safeguarding students. The governing body is aware of the need to enhance its ability to canvass and act on the views of parents and students.

### **External support**

The academy seeks, and makes good use of, external professional support. You purchase the services of the Cambridgeshire local authority for an annual audit for the arrangements to safeguard students, and for on-going advice about child protection issues. Staff attend training on a range of issues relating to students' well-being such as self-harm and sexual exploitation, and then share information with other staff.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Make sure that policies are tailored to the particular needs and circumstances of students at this academy, and are reviewed frequently for their effectiveness.
- Implement a revised behaviour policy that is suitably concise and gives clear guidance for staff and students about expectations and procedures.

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

Yours sincerely

Heather Yaxley  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**