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15 January 2015

Mrs Pauline Bloor
Headteacher
St John's CofE (A) Primary School
Wheatly Avenue
Trent Vale
Stoke-on-Trent
Staffordshire
ST4 6SB

Dear Mrs Bloor

No formal designation monitoring inspection of St John's CofE (A) Primary School, Stoke-On-Trent

Following my visit with Yvonne Brown and Peter Martin, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 15 January 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out in response to a complaint made to Ofsted which raised concerns about the school. The complaint was deemed to be a qualifying complaint and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector decided that an inspection should take place to follow up the whole-school issues that were raised in the complaint. Inspectors sought to establish:

- whether safeguarding arrangements meet requirements
- the effectiveness of the school's approach to managing pupils' behaviour.

Evidence

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record, policies and documents relating to safeguarding and child-protection arrangements, records of behaviour incidents, pupils' attendance records, minutes of governing body minutes, and records relating to safeguarding training for staff. Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, teachers, support staff, administrative staff and groups of pupils. They also met with the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor and a representative from the local authority. During the inspection, inspectors made brief visits to classrooms. Inspectors took account of 39 responses to the Ofsted staff

questionnaire. There were insufficient responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) for these to be made available to inspectors.

During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

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

The school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

Context

St John's CofE (A) is a larger than average-sized primary school. There are 322 pupils on roll. Almost three quarters of pupils are White British, with the remainder from a range of heritage groups. An above-average proportion speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is above the national average. Eighteen per cent of pupils in the school are disabled or have special educational needs. A higher-than-average proportion of pupils is disadvantaged and eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or in care). In September 2014, two newly qualified teachers joined the school.

The school's progress in relation to the whole-school issues that were raised

Teachers and support staff work together well to make sure pupils are safe. Parents and pupils appreciate the care shown by staff. One parent typically described the school's approach to looking after pupils as, 'amazing!' Senior leaders and teachers place a strong emphasis on teaching pupils how to stay safe in a range of situations. Pupils of all ages spoke confidently about the importance of using the internet and social media carefully and reporting any concerns they may have to an adult. Pupils are knowledgeable about different types of bullying. They state that incidences of bullying are uncommon and dealt with quickly. School records confirm this to be the case.

Last academic year attendance was below the national average for primary schools. Staff are taking appropriate action to encourage pupils to attend regularly. The range of rewards for attendance has been extended. Staff are also working more closely with the small number of families whose children do not always attend as often as they might. As a consequence, the attendance of some pupils has improved since September 2014. The headteacher acknowledges that further work is required to ensure all pupils attend school regularly. School records show that last term the attendance of disadvantaged pupils was below the national average for primary

schools. In contrast, the attendance of other pupils in the school was similar to the 2014 national average for primary schools.

Governors ensure that requirements for safeguarding pupils are met. They make sure that all staff receive the training required to keep pupils safe. Governors also regularly review school policies and check that the policies meet current government requirements.

School leaders have revised the school's approach to managing pupils' behaviour in consultation with pupils. There is a clear system of 'rewards' and 'consequences' that is consistently used by all staff. Pupils were particularly complimentary about the rewards they receive. During brief visits to lessons, inspectors observed pupils of all ages working together well and listening carefully to each other and staff. Around school, pupils walked calmly. In the playground pupils played cooperatively.

The headteacher and staff are able to show that, as a result of tailored support, the behaviour of individual pupils is improving. However, they do not have a system in place for analysing the types, rates and patterns of behaviour across the school. As a result, they are not able to identify easily if the current system of 'rewards' and 'consequences' is leading to improvements in pupils' behaviour over time.

External support

The school has not requested specific support from the local authority. The headteacher and governors have valued the advice offered by the local authority in relation to parental complaints. This advice has helped staff and governors to respond appropriately to the concerns raised.

Priorities for further improvement

- Improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.
- Devise a system for analysing the types, rates and patterns in behaviour across the schools.

I am copying this letter to the Director of People Services for Stoke-on-Trent, the Secretary of State for Education and the Chair of the Governing Body. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Usha Devi
Her Majesty's Inspector