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15 May 2015

Mr Hugh Robinson
Principal
Gosforth Junior High Academy
Regent Avenue
Gosforth
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE3 1EE

Dear Mr Robinson

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Gosforth Junior High Academy

Following my visit with Patrick Hargreaves and Frank Cain, Additional Inspectors, to your academy on 13 and 14 May 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for allowing my colleague, Michael Reeves, Her Majesty's Inspector, to accompany me.

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 because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in a federated academy which shares leadership and governance arrangements with Gosforth Junior High Academy.

Evidence

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements and met with the Principal, a number of senior leaders (directors), the Key Stages 2 and 3 coordinators, a group of subject leaders and a group of teachers. Meetings were also held with a group of governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and inspectors held discussions with a group of pupils. In addition, inspectors scrutinised the academy's self-evaluation and plans for improvement and documents relating to pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the academy's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

Context

Gosforth Junior High Academy is a middle-deemed secondary school which is smaller than the average secondary school. The academy is part of a multi-academy trust with Gosforth Academy. Both academies have the same governing body and Principal, and a number of senior leaders (directors) work across both academies. The number of pupils on roll has risen considerably since the last inspection in 2011. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average and a higher proportion of pupils than average speak English as a second language. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those eligible for the pupil premium, is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority. The proportion of pupils that are disabled or have special educational needs is below average. In the past, a significant number of pupils joined the academy at the start of Year 7, although numbers that transfer at this point have reduced markedly.

Main findings

The inspectors' main focus was to establish whether the academy's safeguarding arrangements met statutory requirements. The inspection found that leaders and managers have robust systems in place to ensure pupils are kept safe and ensure the climate that pervades the academy is friendly, warm and supportive. Members of staff receive child protection training annually and have a very good understanding of the procedures to follow if they encounter any concerns. Senior members of staff work effectively with the local authority to ensure pupils at risk receive the necessary support and that their actions are carefully recorded. All pupils receive regular guidance about the potential risks they could encounter when on-line. The personal, health and social education curriculum also provides good guidance for pupils about other risks and pupils spoke confidently about how to stay safe. In practical lessons, teachers are conscious of possible risks and provide appropriate health and safety guidance. Pupils are very supportive of one another. Those pupils with disabilities or special educational needs receive good support from members of staff and their peers, and benefit from the academy's highly inclusive approach. The governor with particular responsibility for the safeguarding of pupils visits the school each term to check on the effectiveness of procedures and reports annually to the full governing body. The governors ensure there are appropriate policies relating to child protection, anti-bullying, health and safety and whistleblowing in place. These policies are made available to parents and carers via the website.

Inspectors did identify areas of work where further improvement would strengthen the overall effectiveness of this outstanding school.

Leaders and managers have good self-evaluation processes in place and are clear about the academy's strengths and weaknesses. They are taking effective steps to

raise achievement in writing and use assessment information successfully to identify pupils making slower progress. There is an extensive programme in place to provide additional support for those pupils who fall behind. The school's own reliable data show a higher proportion of Year 6 pupils are on track to attain their targets this year and leaders expect attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 to be above the national average in 2015. Disadvantaged pupils, those from minority ethnic groups, those with a disability or special educational need and those who attend the visual impairment unit make rapid progress because of the good additional support they receive in lessons.

The academy has high expectations and the vast majority of pupils behave extremely well. There are a small number of pupils who continue to challenge the academy's code of conduct which has resulted in a relatively high proportion of exclusions. The academy's use of exclusions is now dropping significantly, but some pupils are regularly isolated within the school and miss lessons because of their behaviour.

Teachers expect pupils to work hard and there is a climate of endeavour and enjoyment in lessons. Levels of pupils' attendance are above the national average and very few are regularly absent. The vast majority of pupils are punctual in the morning and move quickly and calmly around the academy between lessons. Teachers provide interesting and engaging activities and adapt the tasks to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. In addition, there is a wide range of additional opportunities to challenge and stretch the most able. There are numerous opportunities within the curriculum where pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding is developed. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their involvement in a mock general election and were highly knowledgeable about different faiths. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, however, this does not always lead to pupils' improving their work. In addition, the academy does not have a strategy to develop good handwriting, which results in some untidy presentation.

Members of the governing body have a strong commitment to comprehensive education and the provision of educational excellence for the Gosforth community. They have a clear strategic vision for the development of education in the area. They have an accurate picture of the academy's performance over time, but are less rigorous in checking the progress of pupils across the year, or the impact of strategies to raise achievement.

External support

The governors employ an external consultant to provide an annual evaluation of the strengths and areas for development across the federation. Although helpful in providing a broad picture of performance, the external consultant's report does not provide governors with detailed information on the performance of Gosforth Junior High Academy. For example, the report does not include an evaluation of the performance of different groups of pupils.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure teachers' marking and feedback to pupils help them to improve their work. In addition, ensure greater attention is given to the development of good handwriting and presentation.
- Further reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions and minimise the use of isolation in school, by strengthening the support provided for the small number of pupils that exhibit more challenging behaviour.
- Ensure governors check regularly on the current progress of all pupils, including that of different groups of pupils.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Wellbeing, Care and Learning for Newcastle upon Tyne, to the Secretary of State for Education and the Chair of the Governing Body. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Chris Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector