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2 December 2015

Mrs Shilpa Rathore
Acting principal
Oasis Academy Boulton
Boulton Road
Handsworth
Birmingham
B21 0RE

Dear Mrs Rathore

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Oasis Academy Boulton

Following my visit with Rachel Howie, Her Majesty's Inspector to your academy on 18 November 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 because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements at the academy.

Evidence

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. We also met with you as the acting principal and designated leader for safeguarding, groups of pupils, parents, the Chair of the Academy Council, the Regional Director and the Chief Executive of Oasis Academy Trust. Minutes of meetings held at local, regional and national level were scrutinised in relation to the Trust's safeguarding policies and practices, together with the academy's records of behaviour and racist incidents, attendance and staff recruitment and training.

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

The academy's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

Context

This academy is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The largest groups are of Indian, Pakistani and Any other ethnic heritage. The majority of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the national average. The number of pupils who join or leave the academy part way through their primary education is above average. You and two assistant principals were appointed in September 2015. The leadership team in place has therefore changed since the previous inspection in March 2015.

Behaviour and safety

Pupils feel that behaviour is good and the parents who spoke to us agree. Pupils behave well and show good levels of respect for adults and each other. Older pupils help to supervise and serve drinks at lunchtime for younger pupils and act as positive role models. Pupils in most classes have positive attitudes to learning but there are a small number, especially in Year 2, who find it difficult to concentrate fully and get restless very quickly. You have recognised this and have taken steps to make amendments to the curriculum, for example by introducing more creative topic work and by providing additional adult support to those who need it. Your records of behaviour show that you are aware of where low-level disruption occurs in lessons and you are working with teachers to improve this. Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying. They say that bullying is rare but they know who to go to if there is a problem. They are confident that adults deal with any incidents quickly and effectively. Pupils particularly enjoyed the drama workshop you commissioned as part of anti-bullying week in the academy.

Parents are confident that their children are safe and well looked after in the academy. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and are aware of potential dangers. For example, when we visited a Year 5 classroom, pupils were using computers and were able to explain the dangers of using the internet and pointed to nearby displays which reminded them about e-safety. Pupils were also clear about the importance of treating everyone fairly and with respect, and showed a good understanding of radicalisation and extremism. Year 6 pupils showed very high levels of maturity when discussing recent media coverage of acts of terrorism. Building on from their knowledge of what to do during the regular fire drills, they suggested that the academy should have a safety strategy for dealing with armed intruders to the academy. 'We should have gun drills so that we know where to hide and what to do.'

Attendance is above average. This is because pupils respond well to the wide range of incentives offered, including certificates and prizes for 100% attendance. The academy has high levels of mobility and, in order to keep a close check on pupils

joining and leaving the academy, you have changed the electronic system used to record pupils' attendance and absence. Additionally, both of the academy's attendance officers carry out their roles effectively and call families on the first day of a child's absence to check on their whereabouts. This is followed up with a home visit if there is no telephone response. Referrals are made to the Children Missing in Education team if staff are still unable to locate a pupil's whereabouts. The electronic system introduced is, however, still relatively new and its summary report does not yet include all of the information held by the academy. For example, 61 pupils have left the academy during the last year and inspectors had to spend a great deal of time checking individual records to establish the destinations of each pupil who had left. You accept that the information gathered needs streamlining so that all leaders, including the academy council, can request and receive this information swiftly.

Leadership and management

You have used your wide range of experience to further develop safeguarding procedures within the academy since taking up your post this term. For example, you have ensured that all pupils attending the breakfast club are registered and are therefore accounted for. You have also carried out a safeguarding audit to identify areas of priority. These include staff training, record-keeping and day-to-day safety procedures. This shows that pupils' well-being and safety are rightly given the highest priority. Although the safeguarding policy has been updated, the current policy does not reflect the most recent statutory requirements (July 2015), especially about children missing in education. Additionally, the responsibilities of academy council members are not explicit and no contact number is given for staff should they need to make a referral directly. However, discussions with staff members show that procedures are well understood and carefully followed by the adults in the academy. All staff have received safeguarding training. Consequently, they know how to respond to any concerns about a pupil's well-being and safety.

You and other leaders ensure that clear and detailed records are kept of any incidents or concerns about pupils' welfare. Actions taken by the school and other agencies are appropriately recorded. You, as the designated safeguarding leader, make appropriate and timely referrals to other agencies when needed and your previous experience ensures you know precisely who to contact.

Site security and day-to-day procedures to keep pupils safe are appropriate. Several of these were observed during the inspection. For example, the caretaker monitors the arrival of younger pupils and then ensures the gates are locked at 9.00am promptly. Visitors have their identity checked by staff and are then required to sign in and wear a badge. Thorough and up-to-date risk assessments are completed for a wide range of academy activities and for every academy trip. A good example of a risk assessment was seen during the inspection for a visit to Pizza Express by the Reception class. While staff carry out daily checks of the early years outdoor learning area they do not record the results of these checks.

You keep records of racist, behaviour and bullying incidents which occur in the academy. These records confirm that timely and appropriate action is taken in response to individual incidents. However, you do not analyse the information collected to identify any patterns or trends. This means it is difficult to monitor different types of incident or to evaluate the success of any follow-up actions.

Senior leaders and the academy council ensure that safer recruitment procedures are robust. Staff files show that records of staff employed are well organised and contain the required information. Leaders collect references and carry out the required legal checks on all adults to ensure that pupils are safe when in their care.

Members of Oasis Academy Trust at local, regional and national level rightly place great importance on ensuring safeguarding procedures are robust. They take concerns and complaints seriously and follow these up swiftly and effectively. Training in safeguarding is provided for members, including that related to extremism and radicalisation. Regular visits to school are also carried out to check information for themselves, for example the Chair of the Academy Council reviews the single central record each half term. Minutes from meetings of the academy council show that senior leaders share safeguarding information with members in order to keep them fully informed. For example, the results of the safety audit conducted by you when you joined the academy were presented, together with areas identified for further action.

External support

The local authority has provided helpful advice and guidance to you as acting principal when you have needed to make a referral about a particular child. Other outside agencies, including school health, provide good support for individual pupils, especially those who are subject to child protection plans. However, the local authority has been slow to respond to a complaint made earlier this year and has not carried out the review they informed you would happen. As a result, it cannot be certain that the academy's procedures for following up pupils who are missing from education are secure and appropriate.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure the new system for tracking attendance and recording academy leavers is fully utilised to ensure that information is easily accessible by all leaders and monitored closely.
- Analyse behaviour incidents to determine any patterns of pupils' behaviour.
- Update the academy's safeguarding policy so that it reflects the latest Department for Education guidance (July 2015) and is fully accessible to parents on the academy's website.

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

Yours sincerely

Heather Simpson
Her Majesty's Inspector