

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

11 February 2016

Pana McGee
Headteacher
St Paul's Church of England Primary School
Elsworthy Road
London
NW3 3DS

Dear Mrs McGee

No formal designation monitoring inspection of St Paul's Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on Tuesday 19 January 2016, 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.

Evidence

I scrutinised the single central record of recruitment checks and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. Meetings were held with the interim headteacher, the deputy headteacher responsible for all safeguarding matters, the special needs teacher, two newly qualified teachers, three members of the governing body, and the school council. Telephone conversations were held with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and a member of the local authority's multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH).

I looked at a range of documentation. This included case studies, monitoring records of pupils' attendance and behaviour, and evidence of systems for protecting and safeguarding pupils. I considered the 50 responses to the school's questionnaire for parents, because there were very few responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View). A few parents were spoken to at the end of the school day. Brief discussions about behaviour and safety at the school were held with 25 pupils.

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

The school's safeguarding arrangements are effective.

However, while there are no concerns about the safety and well-being of the pupils at the school, it is my view that wider aspects of the school's work in safeguarding require strengthening. This includes the extent to which staff are given additional training on key issues and the quality of curriculum provision to help pupils understand risks and keep themselves safe.

Context

With 210 pupils on roll, St Paul's Church of England Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school. There are more girls than boys. The school serves a diverse community and an above-average number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as a second language is high. An average number of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils included in the school's register of special educational needs is below average, but the proportion with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is well above the national average. The level of pupil mobility is in line with the national average.

Following the promotion of the long-serving headteacher, a part-time executive headteacher from a neighbouring local authority was appointed for the academic year 2014/15. At that time, the current deputy headteacher was head of school and was responsible for the day-to-day running of the school. An experienced interim headteacher was appointed in September 2015. Two members of staff left at the end of the autumn term 2015. Both were replaced by newly qualified teachers, who joined the school in January 2016.

A third recruitment campaign for a permanent headteacher is underway.

Leadership and management – safeguarding requirements

As at the time of the last inspection, leaders and staff are ensuring that pupils are safe and safeguarding requirements are met. The overwhelming majority of parents who took part in the school's survey agree that pupils are safe and happy at the school. Pupils who took part in the discussions spoke with conviction and pride about their school. They confirmed that they are safe, happy, and belong to a community that is kind and gentle. Pupils see their school as the best place to be.

The school ensures that checks on staff, volunteers and members of the governing body are thorough. Nevertheless, information on child protection and safeguarding training records and induction, although available, is not presented in a clear format. The school has recognised that this aspect of its work requires reorganisation.

The school's policy on child protection and safeguarding is detailed and up to date. A minor error in relation to quoting the wrong edition of the Secretary of State's guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education, July 2015', was rectified during the

inspection. All staff have reportedly read the summary of this key document. Members of staff spoken to indicated that they have signed and read the summary document. However, senior leaders, including governors, have not made sure that some other policies are up to date; too many have lapsed, including the policies on behaviour management and equalities. A rolling programme is underway and evidence indicates that the governing body is in the process of validating the most recently revised policies.

The school's website includes information on some key aspects of safeguarding with, for example, named persons with responsibility for overseeing its implementation. Topics covered include personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) lessons as well as interactive materials for pupils and parents on e-safety. All of this supports the governing body's aim in giving safeguarding a high priority. Governors have made sure that staff have received up-to-date training on basic child protection and safeguarding, including all aspects of health and safety. The school has staff who are trained to provide adequate support in administering all aspects of pupils' safety. Effective risk assessment systems are in place but the attention given to additional training and development could be better. Successive senior leaders and the governing body have been slow to provide 'Prevent' training, a national priority. Additional training on female genital mutilation and child sexual exploitation has not yet taken place for all staff, although it is planned.

The governing body holds staff to account for all safeguarding matters. Records of governors' minutes provide ample evidence that the governors consistently keep safeguarding under review. Specific agenda items are reported regularly and include attendance records, exclusions, safeguarding training and health and safety. The commissioned audit on safeguarding undertaken in 2014 correctly identified that, although safeguarding met requirements, changes were required to strengthen practice. The school records information on pupils' behaviour, their attendance and progress, but attention to detail could be improved. The analyses do not take into consideration all groups with protected characteristics that are referred to in the Equality Act 2010.

Senior leaders ensure that systems are in place to record concerns about pupils. Case studies and discussions with staff provide substantial evidence that they know the signs of potential safeguarding concerns and procedures for handling them. Staff dutifully keep records of concerns but they could be more consistent in their approach. Not all staff have used the school's chronological records; some have used a notebook. Of the cases sampled, past records were not all signed or dated and information on actions taken was missing. Staff have not always been kept informed in a timely way about outcomes. The school is now aware of the shortcomings in this area of its work and is taking action.

Nevertheless, records of concern show sound decision making, and show that staff are vigilant when listening to pupils talk about their feelings and experiences. Previously, evidence indicated there was occasionally drift and delay in making referrals. This has now been rectified and is no longer the case. Very few referrals

are made and it is now understood that, however minor a concern, advice and guidance should be sought swiftly. Procedures and reporting lines are better and decision making is without ambiguity. Cases dealt with during this term show that staff have not been hesitant when making referrals. A more authoritative approach is used and has included bypassing initial assessment. As a result, help has been immediate when it has been needed. The school continues to make sure that pupils requiring help and support can access a range of therapeutic and care services.

Pupils are assured that staff deal with all of their worries very well; they also make good use of 'The Hide', a place where they can sit and relax if they are unhappy and need a quiet moment. Pupils indicated that the location of their school helps them to feel safe. The school uses assemblies and the curriculum to raise pupils' awareness of keeping safe at all times. In spite of this coverage, discussions with pupils suggested that their understanding of topics such as e-safety, bullying, sexual exploitation and the danger of drugs could be stronger. Pupils are unworldly about these wider issues and consequently their understanding of how to keep safe is sometimes naive. For example, while pupils are confident that bullying is rare in their school, beyond silly name-calling, they do not fully understand about other forms of bullying. The school recognises that attention to safeguarding matters in the curriculum requires further work to ensure that there is greater breadth and depth in the coverage of key topics.

The vast majority of pupils attend school regularly and attendance in the last school year was above average. However, attendance for the current academic year is slightly lower. The school works well with the education welfare officer to monitor the attendance of the very few pupils with high levels of absence. Action to improve the attendance records of these pupils is being intensified. Effective partnership work is undertaken when a pupil is missing from education. It is not unusual for the school to work with the local community and other partners, including High Commissioners, to determine the safety of any missing pupils.

Behaviour is very good. Discussions and observation of pupils at play indicate that relationships are strong across year groups, gender and different ethnic groups. This confirms the pupils' view that they belong to a caring community. The school has not had any permanent exclusions since the previous inspection. Fixed-term exclusions are rare.

External support

Information sharing between the school and local authority social care service is timely and used well to provide the right support and help when a referral is made. Visits to the school, including multi-agency conferences, are carefully planned ensuring clear procedures are used to make sure that there is targeted support for pupils and families. However, although there are very few referrals, concerns raised have not all been dealt with promptly and with clear resolutions. Discussions with safeguarding officers during the inspection confirmed that two previous cases would be resolved without further delay and practice used to inform school improvement.

The local authority's child protection and safeguarding training programme for staff, including newly qualified teachers, enables them to keep abreast of recent developments.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that the system for recording safeguarding concerns, events, and actions is implemented consistently.
- Ensure that all actions identified in the 2014 safeguarding audit are completed to strengthen practice.
- Before the end of March 2016, improve training and development for all staff by ensuring they are fully aware of, and knowledgeable about, the 'Prevent' agenda.
- Ensure that additional training on female genital mutilation and child sexual exploitation is provided for all staff.
- Increase pupils' awareness and understanding of safeguarding matters by putting into place and implementing a more robust curriculum provision.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for the London Borough of Camden, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Diocese. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Carmen Rodney
Her Majesty's Inspector