

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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30 December 2016

Mrs Roberta Kelly  
Headteacher  
The CE Academy  
Cromwell Campus  
Poole Street  
Northampton  
Northamptonshire  
NN1 3EX

Dear Mrs Kelly

### **No formal designation monitoring inspection of The CE Academy**

Following my visit with Clare Cossor and John Edwards, Ofsted Inspectors, to your school on 7 and 8 December 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, and the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance in the school, in relation to the behaviour and welfare of the pupils.

### **Evidence**

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record of recruitment checks and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, the multi-agency coordinator, the attendance consultant and three governors, including the chair of the governing body. Inspectors visited 15 parts of lessons across key stages 3 and 4, and met with pupils both formally and informally. Pupils observed three debriefing sessions and a campus staff meeting. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during breaktime, during which time they spoke with pupils. Inspectors visited three of the off-site training venues that pupils attend to complete some of their education. The lead inspector telephoned a further three off-site providers.

Inspectors scrutinised documents relating to attendance, behaviour, curriculum planning and governance. The lead inspector looked at the school's single central register.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and managers have taken effective action to maintain the high standards of personal development, behaviour and welfare identified at the school's previous inspection.

## **Context**

The CE Academy is a stand-alone academy that provides an education for key stage 3 and 4 pupils who are at risk of exclusion and who are permanently excluded from mainstream schools. In addition, the school provides education for pupils who are pregnant, and young mothers. The school is located on seven separate sites in the county of Northamptonshire.

The school has 179 pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic groups and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are below average. The proportion of pupils who receive pupil premium funding is well above the national average. Almost all pupils are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs, or who have an education, health and care plan is well below average. The proportion of pupils who arrive at or leave the school during the academic year is well above average.

The school makes use of nine off-site training providers. These are: Adventure Ways; Centurion Training; Fermynwoods Contemporary Art; FutureStarts Ltd; The Green Patch; Maplefields School; Northampton College; The Seeds of Change; and Youth Works.

## **Behaviour and welfare of pupils**

The headteacher and the senior leaders have ensured that safeguarding pupils is at the very core of the school's work, and that of its staff. Senior leaders actively promote a culture of vigilance that encourages staff to review regularly pupils' attendance, behaviour and welfare. The open and clear communication channels that exist between staff and leaders across all of the school's seven sites enable staff to share quickly any safeguarding concerns they may have. Consequently, staff and leaders are able to take well-considered, timely and effective action to support pupils who are experiencing difficulties. In so doing, they are able to ensure that pupils are safe and that, furthermore, they understand how to be safe.

Staff receive wide-ranging and regular safeguarding training. They have received training on recognising the different types of abuse, on the latest government safeguarding guidance, and on preventing radicalisation and extremism. Staff also receive training about safeguarding issues that senior leaders, through their close monitoring of pupils' welfare, have identified as being particularly pertinent to the safety of the school's pupils. Such training has included issues relating to online safety and social media, child sexual exploitation, self-harm, and attachment theory. Because of this wide-ranging and regular training, staff have a clear understanding of what they should look for to identify safeguarding concerns about their pupils. Furthermore, staff fully understand that it is their responsibility to take action where they have a concern and to report such concerns to the appropriate authorities. This includes what they should do where they have a concern about the actions of an adult towards a pupil.

Senior leaders are sensitive to local issues that may affect their pupils' welfare. They ensure that they themselves gather accurate information in relation to these issues, and that they pass this on to their staff. Furthermore, senior leaders make sure that the school works closely with local agencies to support both staff and pupils in dealing with these issues. Senior leaders' awareness of local issues has ensured that staff are aware of concerns relating to substance misuse, sexual exploitation and gang culture. Where these issues affect the school's pupils, staff provide close and effective support to ensure that pupils are safe.

Senior leaders closely monitor the support that pupils receive to keep them safe. This includes the support pupils receive from the staff who act as their key tutors, and from external agencies. This close monitoring provides the headteacher and her senior leaders with a detailed understanding of the welfare and needs of individual pupils. Furthermore, it enables senior leaders to ensure that pupils receive appropriate support to ensure that they are safe, that they attend regularly and that they can manage their behaviour effectively. Such close monitoring of individual pupils enables senior leaders to know their pupils well. However, senior leaders rightly recognise that their processes for measuring the impact of the school's support over time on groups of pupils with similar needs is not as sharp as it could be. They have taken action recently to resolve this issue.

Since the previous inspection, the school has employed a full-time member of staff, the multi-agency coordinator, to monitor the welfare of the school's most vulnerable pupils, including children who are looked after. This member of staff works closely with all staff to monitor the attendance, behaviour and progress of these pupils across all seven of the school's sites. She also attends all the meetings held with the external agencies to review the welfare of these pupils. Her role has ensured that there is regular communication with external agencies, including the local authority. Furthermore, the multi-agency coordinator enables senior leaders to monitor sharply the welfare of these pupils. Because of this, they are able to take swift and effective action to support these pupils where any concerns may arise.

Those pupils the inspectors met are appreciative of the close support that they receive from their key tutors, their teachers and senior leaders. They recognise how the work of all staff enables them to keep safe. They said that they feel safe at the school and have people they can speak with if they have any concerns. They are confident that staff would take action to help them resolve their concerns.

Senior leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, which they closely monitor. Senior leaders ensure that, where necessary, pupils receive appropriate support to enable them to manage their own behaviour effectively. Senior leaders and staff consistently challenge any behaviour that does not meet their high expectations. They are particularly vigilant of any incidents related to suspected or actual substance misuse, instances of which appear to be low due to the robust systems of vigilance and support.

Pupils whom inspectors met were clear that all pupils are able to manage their behaviour well due to the positive relationships they have with staff and the effective support they receive. Pupils were very clear that such support has enabled them to change their behaviours. They were also clear that, where pupils' behaviour does not meet the school's high expectations, staff take quick and effective action. Pupils reported that incidents of bullying are rare, and that, where it does occur, staff deal with it quickly and effectively. The school's records confirm this.

Senior leaders closely monitor pupils' attendance. They recognise how prolonged absence from school can be a safeguarding issue. Therefore, they work closely with pupils who are regularly absent from school to ensure that their attendance improves. In so doing, staff and senior leaders work closely with pupils' parents or carers. Senior leaders undertake imaginative strategies to encourage pupils to attend school and to engage with their learning. For example, they will consider adapting the courses a pupil studies, or changing the campus a pupil attends, to overcome any barriers to attendance. Because of this close support, the overall rate of attendance at the school is high, particularly when compared with the rate of overall attendance at similar schools. The proportion of pupils who are regularly absent is low. Furthermore, many pupils' attendance improves during their time at the school. This is due to the support they receive, and the positive attitudes to learning that staff instil in pupils. Those pupils whom inspectors met were highly appreciative of this support. They recognise the value in attending school.

Almost all pupils attend some of their education away from the school site, completing work-related courses. This is a deliberate decision on the part of senior leaders to secure pupils' personal development, through broadening their horizons, and enabling them to develop their life skills. Pupils' attendance at these sessions, and their engagement in their learning, are both good. The school maintains close and regular contact with the organisations that provide the off-site education, to ensure that pupils attend regularly, behave well and are kept safe.

There are clear procedures for the organisations that provide the off-site education to report to the school any concerns they may have about a pupil's welfare. The school's key tutors act swiftly to follow up, and resolve, any such concerns.

Senior leaders have ensured that pupils learn how to be safe in a variety of situations. They have achieved this through pupils' weekly personal, social, health and economic education lessons, known by the school as PACC. These lessons enable pupils to consider issues related to their welfare, their personal development and their health. Recent topics that pupils have studied include substance misuse, sexual exploitation, the nature of consent, online safety and radicalisation. The school engages well with external organisations to provide visiting speakers, and to offer pupils counselling where it is appropriate. Senior leaders ensure that, before they leave the school, each pupil learns about the key issues that may affect their welfare. In the PACC lessons that inspectors observed, pupils engaged well with the topic they were studying. They listened attentively to their teacher, and to each other.

The school works well to prepare pupils for the next steps in their education, employment or training, and for life in modern Britain. In their PACC lessons, pupils consider fundamental British values, including individual liberty, the right to vote, and mutual respect and tolerance. Pupils also receive advice and guidance from their teachers and from an external careers guidance service to develop clear ideas regarding their next steps when they leave the school. For the past two years, almost all Year 11 pupils have moved on to some form of education, employment or training. Significant proportions of pupils from other year groups have left the school to return to mainstream education. This is because senior leaders ensure that pupils receive opportunities to manage their own behaviour, to engage in learning, and to develop higher expectations for themselves and for others.

Governors have a clear understanding of the comprehensive work that staff and leaders undertake to keep pupils safe. Governors receive regular safeguarding updates at full governing body meetings. Furthermore, the chair regularly meets with the headteacher to consider safeguarding issues. Because of this, governors have a keen understanding of the issues that affect the pupils' welfare. They, rightly, have confidence in the school's staff and senior leaders to ensure that pupils are safe.

Individually, governors bring a wealth of safeguarding knowledge to the governing body through their own professional roles. They offer appropriate support and challenge to ensure that senior leaders' actions comply with the school's safeguarding procedures and are in the best interests of the pupils. Governors also monitor the effectiveness with which external agencies engage with the school to ensure that pupils receive the support they require.

Governors have a clear understanding of the action they should take where there are safeguarding concerns. This includes any concerns that relate to the actions of an adult towards a pupil.

### **External support**

The school works effectively with a wide range of external agencies to ensure that pupils are helped to keep safe, and learn how to be safe.

The school works closely with the local police, and with the child protection services that the local authority provides. Senior leaders ensure that staff make timely referrals to these agencies where this is necessary. Staff and leaders are tenacious in following up these referrals, to ensure that the agencies take timely and effective action to support and safeguard the pupil. Where they feel the response is not appropriate, the school's staff are prepared to challenge the agencies. School records that inspectors looked at provided examples of where this challenge has secured better support for the pupils.

The school also engages well with local charities and organisations that work with young people in relation to substance misuse, online safety and child sexual exploitation. The school uses these organisations effectively to provide pupils with opportunities to learn how to be safe, and to receive close support and counselling where it is required.

The school engages with an external occupational therapist to provide further support to pupils who are experiencing difficulties. Senior leaders also engage the services of an external attendance officer to ensure that pupils who are absent for long periods attend school more regularly. Senior leaders' effective engagement with these professionals enables the school to provide timely support to pupils.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Further develop strategies to enable senior leaders and governors to monitor more effectively the impact over time of their work to support pupils' behaviour and welfare, particularly for groups of pupils who have similar specific needs.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Northamptonshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Simon Hollingsworth

**Her Majesty's Inspector**