

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



5 May 2017

Mr Joseph Hellett
Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School
Old London Road
Hastings
East Sussex
TN35 5NA

Dear Mr Hellett

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 19 April 2017, 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 aspects of the effectiveness of leadership and management in the school.

Evidence

I scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements, including the local authority's recent review of safeguarding. I met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the chair of the governing body, members of the support staff, a representative group of pupils, and two representatives of the local authority. I also met with parents in the playground at the end of the school day.

During the inspection I conducted a learning walk, accompanied by the headteacher, visiting every classroom and talking to pupils about their work. I observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, as they moved around the school and during their morning break. I also attended an assembly.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

Context

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School is a slightly smaller than average primary school. The number on roll is 217. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language is lower than average, as is the proportion entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than average.

Main Findings

There is a strong culture of ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils at the school. Staff know pupils very well and are clear about their individual and collective responsibility to keep children safe. Staff at all levels receive appropriate safeguarding training, commensurate with the degree of responsibility that they hold. This includes training for the school's three designated safeguarding leads and specialist training for the member of staff responsible for administering the single central record of staff checks. Staff are aware of what to do if they have concerns and who to speak to if they require advice or guidance.

Visits to classrooms and observations of pupils moving around the school and interacting at playtime showed that pupils are happy and enjoy coming to school. Levels of supervision in the playground and other areas of the school are adequate. Pupils' attitudes to learning are strong. Pupils told me that 'people are kind here' and that 'teachers look after us'. During a formal meeting with pupils, one told me, 'It is unusual for pupils to be naughty, because there is no reason for them to be naughty.' Pupils were very clear that they feel safe in school and know who to speak to if they have problems.

The school's curriculum is effective in promoting the well-being of pupils. The social and emotional aspects of learning are given a high priority. Pupils benefit from a wide range of activities and special events to help develop their understanding of issues such as fire safety or the potential dangers of using the internet. The buddy system, which pairs pupils from Year 6 with children in Reception, is particularly welcomed by pupils. Themed events such as 'friendship week' give pupils clear messages about tolerance and diversity, and help them to understand what constitutes bullying and what to do if they have worries or concerns.

All parents who talked to me during the inspection expressed an opinion that their children are safe in school. Some parents identified the main trunk road immediately outside the school as a concern, but said that their children are aware of the dangers and the provision of a school crossing supervisor helps alleviate the potential dangers. Parents said that communication is good and that they appreciate the open access they have to the headteacher and other staff.

Leaders and governors carry out their statutory duties effectively. They have been proactive after the recent review of safeguarding conducted by the local authority,

acting on recommendations and seeking to improve systems and procedures further. Capacity to monitor the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements has been increased by reallocating the position of principal designated safeguarding lead to another member of staff. Record-keeping systems are being updated, and procedures to process concerns have been given more clarity.

School leaders have a clear understanding of their responsibility to keep children safe. Policies relating to all aspects of safeguarding, including behaviour and anti-bullying, follow current guidance and are reviewed at appropriate intervals by the governing body. Staff training is up to date and has been delivered by appropriately qualified professionals. Partnerships with outside agencies are effective.

External support

The local authority provides the school with a wide range of good-quality support and guidance. This includes bespoke whole-staff training and specific guidance for leaders and governors about different aspects of safeguarding. The recent review of safeguarding arrangements at the school acknowledged the many strengths in provision while identifying some key points to address, including aspects of site safety and record-keeping. The transition to a more efficient system of recording safeguarding, behaviour and attendance concerns is ongoing and will need more time to embed fully. The local authority is committed to supporting the school in the immediate future and has agreed a timetable with leaders and governors to continue to monitor progress in developing good practice beyond the statutory minimum.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that the transition to a more integrated and effective system to record and monitor safeguarding, behaviour and attendance concerns is further accelerated.
- Fully embrace the support and expertise offered by the local authority and other outside agencies, so that leaders and governors are always aware of the latest guidance and best practice to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Clive Close
Her Majesty's Inspector