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13 June 2017

Mr Samuel Bartholomew
Headteacher
Dunmore Primary School
Northcourt Road
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Dear Mr Bartholomew

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Dunmore Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 16 May 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 for pupils at the school.

Evidence

I scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. I held discussions with you, the deputy headteacher and some teaching and non-teaching staff. I spoke to a group of pupils to seek their views about the school and to three governors, including the chair of the governing body. I had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. I also scrutinised a range of school documentation including data about attendance and behaviour, plans aimed at further improving safeguarding practice in the school, minutes of meetings held by the governing body, the school's whistleblowing, safeguarding and child protection policies and a report from the local authority. I also reviewed how staff record and follow up concerns about pupils and the school's work with other agencies. Together we observed part of a lesson about safety. I took account of the views of parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. The school's checks to ensure the suitability of staff to work with children were also reviewed.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

Context

The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is less than half the national average. A lower proportion of pupils than in most schools are from minority ethnic groups and a few are learning to speak English as an additional language. More pupils than in most schools have special educational needs and/or disabilities, receive support, have a statement of special educational needs and/or have an education, health and care plan. Most pupils begin and leave the school at the usual times. Staff turnover is low. The school has experienced some difficulties in recruiting staff but not in retaining them.

Safeguarding

Senior leaders and governors work together as a highly effective team. Together you have ensured good strategic planning and rigorous safeguarding procedures. You have developed robust systems for monitoring the welfare of pupils, particularly those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. A good example is the audit of safeguarding that takes place at regular intervals during the year. Importantly, the audit includes checking on how concerns about individual pupils have been recorded and followed up. The outcomes of the audit feed into a helpful action plan that identifies clear next steps such as, for example, providing safeguarding training for all adults who act as volunteers in the school.

Together with the deputy headteacher and other designated safeguarding leads in the school, you have built well on the effective safeguarding practice that was already in place. There are detailed records that show the extent to which the school works with other agencies to support the needs of pupils and, at times, also their families. There are particularly effective links with social services, speech and language therapists as well as health, and mental health, workers. You ensure that the school undertakes the appropriate and necessary checks when recruiting staff. This includes checking on whether staff should be disqualified from working with pupils because of their association with a person who could potentially put pupils at risk of harm. Records of checks on the suitability of staff to work with children at the school are thorough and updated reliably when new staff join the school.

Staff recognise their collective responsibility in ensuring the safety of pupils and of being alert to signs of potential safeguarding concerns. This ensures that, where possible, appropriate early help is identified and provided for pupils. Staff have benefited from regular and extensive training about child protection, safeguarding and how to help prevent pupils being at risk of extremism and radicalisation.

Governors challenge senior leaders rigorously about the school's work in relation to safeguarding. Together with senior leaders, governors regularly review the number of concerns that have been raised about pupils and the school's actions and responses to these. This helps to ensure that safeguarding procedures are maintained to a high standard. Senior leaders track individual pupils closely, especially those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. However, they do not analyse pupils by groups to check if any groups are overly represented in behaviour logs and records of concerns raised.

The staff who met with me stated that they find the school's safeguarding and child protection policy informative and extremely useful. This is because it helps them to understand their roles and responsibilities and what to do should they have a concern, and if a pupil makes a disclosure of a safeguarding nature. Although the school's policy was updated in September 2016, and was based on the local authority's model, it does not refer to the most up-to-date publication entitled 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015'. Furthermore, the school's current policy is not sufficiently explicit about the need to take the wishes and feelings of children into account or to seek feedback from them.

Under your strong leadership, staff work effectively with parents to improve the attendance of pupils who do not attend school as regularly as they should. This has led to a reduction in the number of pupils who are persistently absent. Levels of attendance are improving and are currently above the national average for primary schools. Senior leaders check rigorously whether or not there are links between pupils' absence and any safeguarding concerns. The home-school link worker works successfully to help pupils to improve their levels of attendance, particularly those who are potentially vulnerable and/or those who have an education, health and care plan.

You monitor and track incidents of undesirable behaviour carefully. This helps to ensure that appropriate action is taken where individuals appear to be overly represented in the logs that record behaviour-related incidents. Staff complete behaviour logs diligently so that the actions taken by staff are clear, including whether or not there has been communication with parents and the extent to which issues have been resolved.

My discussion with pupils showed that they are developing well their understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet. Nevertheless, you recognise that there is still more work to be done to ensure that pupils' knowledge and understanding in this area are secure. Pupils appreciate learning about how to keep themselves safe. Visits to the school from experts, including from the police, help them to recognise the potential danger of talking to strangers. Pupils spoke confidently about being able to report cyber bullying and any inappropriate use of the internet. Pupils understand that they have the right to say 'no' if another child or adult hurts them in some way or makes them do something they know is wrong. They welcome the strategies used by staff to enable them to ask for help and raise concerns.

Staff do not track and monitor the learning and progress of pupils' personal, social and health education closely enough. Consequently, not all teachers take sufficient account of pupils' prior learning when planning lessons about this aspect of the curriculum and do not ensure that there is sufficient challenge for the most able pupils.

The vast majority of parents that responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire agree that their child feels safe at school and is well looked after. They say that pupils are well behaved and that the school deals effectively with bullying.

External support

Senior leaders welcome the support and guidance from the local authority (LA). This has helped you to validate the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding processes and to ensure that training for staff is up to date. Support from the LA has contributed to effective communication about safeguarding in the school. A good example is the development of a leaflet for visitors about safeguarding, including what to do should a child make a disclosure.

Priorities for further improvement

- Further improve the way you track and monitor vulnerable pupils, so that you can analyse pupils by groups in order to check if any are overly represented when concerns are raised.
- Refine the school's safeguarding and child protection policy so that it fully reflects the most up-to-date guidance in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015'. This includes making explicit reference to the need to take the wishes and feelings of children into account and seek feedback from them.
- Ensure that lessons intended to develop pupils' personal, social and health education build effectively on pupils' previous learning and provide sufficient challenge for the most able.
- Continue to develop pupils' understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet.

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

Yours sincerely

Gehane Gordelier

Her Majesty's Inspector