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Dr Simon Fox
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Dear Dr Fox

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Flegg High School

Following my visit, with Ofsted inspectors Susan Cox and Paul O'Shea, 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. Thank you for the help you gave to inspectors and the time you took to discuss the school's work.

The monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published no formal designation procedures. The inspection was unannounced and carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills was concerned about the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and the behaviour of pupils at the school.

Evidence

Inspectors examined a wide range of documentation. This included the single central record and other safeguarding and child protection documents. They also looked at pupils' behaviour and attendance records and the school's policies. Inspectors met with you, other senior leaders and the vice-chair of the governing body. In addition, meetings were held with pupils and staff. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school, including at break and lunchtimes, and at the start and end of the school day. I also spoke, on the telephone, with the national leader of education who is supporting the school.

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

Safeguarding is effective. Leaders and managers have taken effective action to ensure pupils' behaviour and welfare are provided for appropriately.

Context

Flegg High School converted to become an academy in September 2013. It is smaller than the average secondary school but the number of pupils joining in Year 7 continues to grow. There are currently 820 pupils aged 11 to 16 on the school's roll. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average overall but this varies across year groups. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.

New teaching appointments have been made recently. These are targeted to resolve a period of staffing difficulties, most evident in mathematics and science.

Ofsted was made aware of concerns about whether the school's systems were effective enough to support pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare and to keep them safe. Because of the concerns raised, the inspection focused on the impact of leaders' actions on these aspects of the school's work. However, inspectors made it clear to school leaders that it is not Ofsted's role to investigate individual complaints.

Main findings

Working together with other school leaders and governors, you have ensured that a culture of safeguarding continues to be well established across the school. Safeguarding training is up to date, systematic and regular. The single central record is carefully maintained and checked routinely to ensure that it meets statutory requirements.

Staff are vigilant and typically responsive to pupils' welfare needs. They are very clear about the signs that could indicate that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Because they understand these risks, your team do not hesitate to make referrals to external agencies, for example the police and social services, when serious concerns arise. Child protection records are managed appropriately and follow-up actions are swift. Evidence presented to inspectors showed that regular checks are made to see if these actions are working and to decide the next steps to take.

Governors work well with you and other leaders to ensure that policies take account of the most recent guidance. They are rigorous in holding you to account for pupils' safety and expect regular reports on safeguarding matters arising in the school. The vice-chair of governors, who has oversight of safeguarding arrangements, meets with staff to test out whether training is effective and to make recommendations about what needs to be changed. As part of this process, pupils' views are sampled. This helps to reassure governors that pupils are safe and that support is available when it is needed.

Bearing out the safeguarding governor's checks, most pupils inspectors spoke with said that they feel safe in school and know who they can go to if they have a concern. They were very positive about the help they receive from teachers, support staff, other specialists and student services. Pupils told inspectors that, although bullying sometimes happens, most of them feel it is dealt with appropriately. A small number of pupils, however, said that occasionally issues take too long to resolve, or that they were not clear about what actions had been taken. Similarly, although most parents feel that the school fulfils its responsibilities to look after pupils' welfare and safety, a few do not agree that this is consistently the case.

In considering the feedback to inspectors from pupils and parents, we discussed some of the related issues highlighted in the previous inspection report. We focused, initially, on the recommendation to improve opportunities for parents to communicate with you and other senior leaders about any concerns that they might have.

Since the inspection in June 2016 you have introduced a range of strategies to improve communications. These include the fortnightly 'principal's surgeries' for parents to meet with you in school. A parents' council is being set up to establish further links with you, senior leaders and governors. Regular newsletters keep parents up to date with important information and address any unintended misconceptions, for example around school uniform requirements. You have also recently looked again at the school's complaints procedures, to make sure that the guidance is easy for parents to understand if they need to use it. Governors play their part by making checks on the number of complaints coming into the school, so that they can hold you and other leaders to account for issues that arise.

You continue to give high priority to sustaining the good standards of behaviour seen at the previous inspection. Since then, you have benefited from external support to help you to continue to improve staff training. This includes work with the local authority, behaviour management specialists and support for you and senior leaders from a national leader of education. There are further plans in place for teachers to visit other successful schools to learn from their good practice.

Your in-school health professionals have provided useful expertise to inform ongoing training and support for staff working with pupils with challenging behaviour. This is because these challenges are sometimes linked to complex medical and/or emotional needs.

Inspectors saw mainly positive attitudes to learning in lessons and generally calm and orderly conduct at break and lunchtimes around the school. Staff presence, as pupils arrived at the start of the school day, ensured prompt arrival to lessons. The odd incident of more boisterous behaviour in outside areas was managed appropriately by staff on duty. In discussions with inspectors, pupils associated some less positive behaviour with lessons in subjects where there have been previous staffing difficulties and more frequent use of supply teachers. You

explained to me how the recent new teacher appointments are targeted to address these issues.

Expectations for pupils' behaviour are set out in well-known policies and procedures. The system of rewards and sanctions is clear for staff, parents and students. Senior leaders have taken steps to strengthen the consistency of how effectively staff manage unacceptable behaviour, through regular checks and by clarifying reporting expectations. Incidents of poor behaviour are recorded by year group and type. Information is then analysed to identify if interventions are working and any further actions that need to be taken. Records show that incidents of less positive behaviour, related to particular year groups, are reducing. However, this aspect remains a high priority for your work. You recognise that there is still more to do to resolve a few remaining concerns, some of which are linked to the more challenging behaviour of a small number of pupils in the school.

With an eye on further improvement, you have changed your approach to internal exclusion, in particular to involve more senior leaders in supervising the process. In-school information suggests that the new model is beginning to make a difference to the number of repeat incidents reported. Indeed, some of the pupils that I spoke with during the inspection were keen to tell me how much their behaviour has improved because of the interventions and the follow-up support from school staff.

You have rightly placed a strong emphasis on ensuring that pupils attend school regularly. Rigorous monitoring systems are in place. Calls to parents are prompt when pupils do not turn up for school. Where there are difficulties for pupils in attending school, because of their specific needs, staff work with families to provide support and to help pupils to catch up. Overall attendance is similar to the national average but the persistent absence rate of a small group of pupils, despite the school's continuing best efforts, is still too high.

Almost all pupils continue in education, employment and/or training at the end of key stage 4. The effective information, advice and guidance the school provides helps them to make appropriate progression choices. Pupils enjoy extra-curricular opportunities to take part in charity work and take on leadership roles, for example acting as peer mentors. This helps them to develop useful social and interpersonal skills.

External support

The school continues to make use of a wide range of external agencies to ensure it offers good-quality care for pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The programme of personal development, which includes contributions from the police, health professionals and external speakers, is effective in raising pupils' awareness of how to stay safe and to lead healthy lifestyles. You continue to work

with a national leader of education who is providing good support for the school on its journey of ongoing improvement.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that all teachers and support staff apply the school's behaviour management policy consistently and well.
- Continue to monitor and extend the impact of strategies to improve the attendance and behaviour of a small number of pupils in each year group.
- Continue to improve the effectiveness of communications with parents.

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

Yours sincerely

Christine Dick
Her Majesty's Inspector