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Mr Tony Milovsorov
The Jane Lane School, A College for Cognition & Learning
Churchill Road
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Dear Mr Milovsorov

No formal designation monitoring inspection of The Jane Lane School, A College for Cognition & Learning

Following my visit with Simon Mosley, Her Majesty's Inspector to your school on 13–14 September 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

Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents about safeguarding and child protection arrangements, and sampled some case files. They examined the single central record and met with the headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding lead, members of the governing body, other leaders, members of staff, three groups of pupils and two representatives of the local authority. The lead inspector also had telephone conversations with staff from the human resources department of the local authority. While there were insufficient responses on Parent View, inspectors considered the responses given to the school's parent surveys.

Other key documentation was also scrutinised. This included information about staff training, minutes of meetings of the governing body, and behaviour and attendance records. Inspectors also made short visits to primary, secondary and post-16 classes with senior leaders.

During the inspection, evidence was brought to my attention concerning a current safeguarding complaint and subsequent investigation. The evidence gathered satisfied me that appropriate local procedures have been followed with regard to this investigation.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

Context

The school is smaller than the average-sized school. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language are both below the national average. Nearly half the pupils are eligible for pupil premium, government funding to support disadvantaged pupils and those looked after by the local authority. A small number of pupils are looked after.

At the time of the inspection, two senior members of staff were absent from school as a result of illness.

Safeguarding

Leaders are taking effective action to ensure that pupils are safe at The Jane Lane School. Inspectors saw a school with pupils who are happy, feel safe and valued as individuals. Parent responses to the school's survey were overwhelmingly positive and also reflect this view. Following recent concerns expressed by the local authority about safeguarding arrangements, leaders and governors have reflected on and reviewed their policies and practice. They have developed a safeguarding action plan to address areas of concern, as well as improve practice further. Leaders and governors will be sharing the impact of these actions with local authority officers in the near future. Inspectors saw evidence that the action that has been taken has had a positive impact on improving safeguarding practice and procedures in the school.

All staff have received updated safeguarding training recently and they have a clear understanding of steps they should take if they have concerns about a child's welfare. Staff receive additional updates on other aspects of safeguarding, including the 'Prevent' duty, female genital mutilation, safe touching and sexting. Leaders have introduced additional daily briefing sessions for staff so that relevant safeguarding information can be shared, where it is appropriate to do so.

Staff are recruited to the school safely. Some minor administrative errors were seen on the single central record but these were addressed during the inspection. Procedures are in place for managing allegations or concerns about adults or other

pupils should they arise and staff know how to raise concerns about unsafe or poor safeguarding practice. During the inspection, inspectors saw two safeguarding issues dealt with in a timely and rigorous way by staff.

Leaders make sure that newly appointed staff are provided with information about all aspects of safeguarding. The governing body have all received level 1 training in safeguarding and plans are in place to increase the number of governors trained in safer recruitment. Not all governors are sufficiently familiar with their responsibilities set out in the Department for Education's 'Keeping children safe in education 2016' statutory guidance. As a result, they do not always challenge leaders in a robust and timely way to check that systems for safeguarding pupils are being used well.

Relevant safeguarding policies have been updated but there has been a delay in governors ratifying these policies, some of which should be updated annually and so are now out of date. Governors have not ensured that the school's website is compliant with the Department for Education's requirements.

Written records are stored securely and any referrals made to the designated safeguarding lead or his deputies are dealt with in a timely way. Leaders will challenge other agencies if they feel that their concerns about a pupil have not been addressed. Protocols for pupils missing education are followed.

The wider work of senior leaders has not always been monitored closely enough in the past and this has meant that some issues have been allowed to drift. For example, inspectors could not find any evidence that delays to meetings for children looked after, or paperwork which was not received when expected, had been followed up rigorously. While supervision is available for the designated safeguarding lead and his deputies, this is currently provided by a member of the governing body, which leads to a blurring of roles.

Support for pupils who have medical conditions is robust. Leaders have adopted the local authority model policy for supporting pupils with medical conditions and care plans are in place. Staff receive regular training in the use of medication, which is stored securely. Records of the administration of medication are well kept.

Attendance at school had been declining since the last inspection but this has improved recently and is now at a higher rate than during the last three years. Persistent absence, while still high, has declined. Attendance is followed up rigorously and staff use a range of strategies to promote good attendance and support pupils and families whose attendance could be improved. There is detailed information about individual pupils' attendance, along with actions taken, but leaders do not yet analyse patterns of attendance for groups of pupils. Leaders and governors know that attendance is a priority area for further improvement.

In the past, behaviour appears to have been less well-managed. There have been high rates of fixed-term exclusions, increasing year on year. More recently,

improvements to the way in which behaviour is managed by staff, with a focus on de-escalation of incidents, have led to a marked decrease in fixed-term exclusions. Staff have received additional training on behaviour management and the use of physical intervention and they recognise that because they are dealing with behaviour in a different way, behaviour is improving.

Concern had previously been raised about the frequency of use and recording of physical interventions. Records show that there has been a marked reduction in the use of these interventions, particularly over the last six months. There has been no use of physical interventions this term. Pupils also recognise this significant improvement, agreeing that, 'Holding hasn't happened for a long time.'

Staff have received additional training on the recording of incidents in the bound book and inspectors saw that this is now much improved. Incidents are logged in detail and pupils and staff are given time to reflect on any incidents of physical intervention. However, leaders do not yet analyse patterns of behaviour to enable practice to be improved further.

Positive behaviour is rewarded and pupils know and understand the school rules and expectations of good behaviour. During the inspection, pupils behaved well and received effective support from staff in lessons and at break and lunchtimes.

Pupils told inspectors that everyone usually behaves well in the school, and they know that there are consequences for inappropriate behaviour. They like the school rules and rewards. They said that bullying sometimes happens, but when it does, teachers deal with it quickly. Pupils report that staff help them and the teachers are 'wonderful'. They understand about different forms of bullying, including racist and homophobic bullying, and know that this is not acceptable.

The personal, social and health education curriculum is effective in enabling pupils to learn how to keep themselves and others safe. There is a comprehensive range of themes covered during the school year, where pupils learn about aspects such as online safety, the misuse of drugs and alcohol, playing safely outside, water safety and dangers in the home. They are provided with appropriate sex and relationships education relevant to their age and ability.

Teachers make sure that work is pitched to pupils' abilities. This enables them to make progress in their learning. Pupils' work is well presented. In 2016, pupils at the end of key stage 4 achieved the school's best-ever GCSE results, with 25% of the cohort achieving five A* to G grades, including English and mathematics. Pupils in key stage 4 in 2017 have achieved an average of four GCSEs each.

Pupils at the end of key stage 2 also made progress in their learning in 2016. The school's systems for moderating work make sure that judgements about pupils' achievements are accurate. Staff take part in regular moderation sessions with other special schools in the local authority and are planning to extend this practice

with mainstream schools.

External support

The school's improvement adviser is working effectively with leaders to identify further improvements for the school, including the development of the key stage 2 provision and the role of middle leaders. Strengths and areas for school improvement are known and agreed with leaders. In the year since she was appointed, the adviser has ensured that the focus on interventions for reading has had a positive impact on pupils' progress.

Leaders and governors recognise that their working relationship with some local authority officers could be more productive. They are fully committed to continue to make swift improvements to further enhance and embed their safeguarding practice, and work cooperatively with officers from the local authority.

Priorities for further improvement

- Leaders and governors should ensure that they work in collaboration with officers from the local authority to consolidate the school's improved safeguarding practices.
- Governors and leaders at all levels should improve their systems for monitoring and developing key aspects of the school's work.
- Leaders should make greater use of information about all aspects of the school's work, particularly behaviour, attendance and assessment, so that they can identify patterns and subsequently tailor support and intervention.
- Governors should ensure that the school website is compliant with the Department for Education's requirements.

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

Yours sincerely

Deb Jenkins
Her Majesty's Inspector