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20 November 2017

Mrs Kate Harvey
Headteacher
Beech Hyde Primary School and Nursery
Nurseries Road
Wheathampstead
St Albans
Hertfordshire
AL4 8TP

Dear Mrs Harvey

No formal designation inspection of Beech Hyde Primary School and Nursery

Following my visit to your school on 7 November 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This 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 at the school.

Evidence

I scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. I met with you and your inclusion coordinator to discuss your roles as the designated safeguarding leads in the school. I also met with groups of pupils, parents, staff, governors, including the chair of governors, and a representative of the local authority. In addition, I examined the 37 responses on Parent View posted for the current academic year and a range of documentation. This included the school's improvement plans, audits of safeguarding arrangements, minutes of governors' meetings, the external review of the governing body, the local authority statement of action and notes of visits by representatives from the local authority.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

Context

Beech Hyde Primary and Nursery School is an average-sized primary school with 237 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British background. A very small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is similar to the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is also similar to the national average. Most pupils join and leave the school at the usual times. At the previous inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding were judged not to be effective.

Since this time, there have been significant changes in leadership at the school. Immediately after the inspection, you took on the role of acting headteacher and at the beginning of November 2017 became the substantive headteacher. Several governors have joined the governing body, and since July 2017, there has been a new chair of governors. In addition, two teachers joined the school at the beginning of this academic year.

Inspection findings

Together with other leaders and governors, you have acted quickly to overcome the identified weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements. There is now a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school because the welfare and safeguarding of pupils are a very high priority for leaders, governors and all staff. You have readily accepted the helpful guidance and support offered by the local authority to secure effective procedures for safeguarding.

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. At least two references are followed up when new staff are appointed to work at the school. You have rightly carried out the correct level of police checks for contractors who visit the school and those volunteers who are in regular contact with pupils. Additional information, such as the type of safeguarding training completed by staff, is also documented. Individual employment files are orderly and comprehensive. As a result, records of the recruitment of staff are complete and up-to-date and all aspects of safer recruitment are now fully in place.

You have worked hard to update the statutory policies relating to safeguarding. These are published on the school's website. The staff who met with me stated that they find the school's safeguarding and child protection policies informative and useful. This is because these policies help all staff to understand their roles and their collective responsibility in ensuring the safety and care of pupils. You and governors are currently reviewing other non-statutory policies relating to safeguarding, to ensure that these are also up to date and fully reflect the strong practice in the school.

All staff have now received extensive training about child protection, safeguarding and how to help prevent pupils being at risk of extremism and radicalisation. An ongoing programme of updates for all staff on safeguarding issues is provided during regular staff meetings. New staff are subject to an induction which requires them to read, understand and apply all essential safeguarding policies.

As the designated safeguarding leaders for the school, you and your inclusion coordinator have put in place rigorous safeguarding and child protection procedures. For example, you have implemented a more effective system for logging child protection concerns, which ensures that responses are timely and focused on the needs of the child. Staff speak highly of these changes. The staff who spoke with me during the inspection said that they know what to do and who to go to if they have a concern about a pupil in school. This ensures that, where possible, appropriate early help is identified and provided for pupils. Child protection files are now well organised and secure. They give a detailed record of the referrals, actions taken and work with outside agencies. This demonstrates that staff take action swiftly and appropriately when necessary.

Governors now hold you and other leaders more to account for the safety and well-being of pupils. Through the support of the local authority, governors are now equally well trained in their responsibilities and continue to participate in regular training. Governors visit the school regularly to check the quality of safeguarding arrangements. They ask pertinent questions about safeguarding and are becoming increasingly knowledgeable about their specific roles and responsibilities. Governors ensure that safeguarding is given a high priority and is a standard item discussed routinely at governing body meetings.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. The pupils I spoke with were confident that any issues or worries that they might have would be taken seriously and that any adults in the school would help them because: 'They are really good at sorting problems out.' Pupils were adamant that incidents of bullying were rare and would be dealt with promptly. Pupils appreciate learning about how to keep themselves safe, for example, when crossing the road and when using the internet.

The parents I spoke to during the inspection, and those that responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, overwhelmingly agree that their children are happy, feel safe at school and are well looked after.

External support

Since the previous inspection, the local authority has provided the necessary expertise and guidance to improve all safeguarding records and procedures at the school. Training has been provided for leaders and governors where necessary. Leaders and governors now demonstrate the capacity fully and consistently to carry out their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. The local authority has checked

continuously that leaders and governors are creating a safe climate within the school. Through a range of onsite visits and detailed reports, the local authority has validated the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding processes and practice.

The school is due to become an academy in spring 2018.

Priorities for further improvement

- Continue to review all policies related to safeguarding in order that they represent the current effective practice in the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Fiona Webb
Her Majesty's Inspector