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22 November 2017

Mrs Laura Ciftci
Head of School
Jerounds Community Primary School
Pyenest Road
Harlow
Essex
CM19 4PH

Dear Mrs Ciftci

No formal designation inspection of Jerounds Community Primary School

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 as a follow-up to safeguarding being judged to be ineffective at the previous section 5 inspection in March 2017.

Evidence

I scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. I met with you, a representative from the local authority, a member of the interim executive board, the designated lead for child protection, the site manager and the office manager. I also met with the member of staff responsible for tracking and monitoring attendance. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, before school at breakfast club and at lunchtimes and playtimes. I held informal discussions with pupils during the course of the day and formally met with two pupils from each class, which was 28 pupils in total. I also met with a group of nine parents and a significant proportion of the school staff – 10 teachers and 14 classroom assistants.

In addition, I reviewed a range of documents relating to safeguarding and behaviour, including policies, behaviour logs, exclusion data, local authority and separate National Education Trust (NET) Academies Trust safeguarding audits, fire drills and health and safety documents.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

Context

Jerounds Community Primary School is a larger-than-average primary school providing education for 405 pupils aged four to 11. The school population includes lower-than-average proportions of disadvantaged pupils and pupils from minority ethnic groups. Most pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is below the national average. However, the proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is above that found nationally.

Since the previous inspection in March 2017, you are the third head of school. You started in September 2017 and have accelerated the pace of improvement, in particular in those areas identified at the time of the previous inspection. As you are aware, staff and parents are concerned about the rate of staff turnover.

Ofsted was made aware of concerns regarding the school's safeguarding systems during the previous inspection in March 2017. Consequently, this inspection focused on the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and the impact of leaders' work to improve the safeguarding culture at the school.

Main findings

Since your appointment in September 2017, you have worked swiftly to bring about rapid improvements across the school. In particular, you and the interim executive board have worked relentlessly to improve the systems and structures in place to safeguard pupils. You have placed improving safeguarding processes, as well as a focus on changing the safeguarding culture of the school, at the centre of school-improvement planning. You have implemented additional safety measures in the form of a register for breakfast club. Consequently, pupils arriving at school are monitored from their first moment in the school building, and more precise registers of attendance have been established.

The interim executive board has performed its statutory duties well in holding you to account for the safeguarding of pupils. Members of the board closely monitor your work to ensure that recruitment processes and child protection records are of a high standard. While school policies relating to safeguarding are compliant with the most recent national guidance, the behaviour policy, attendance policy and safeguarding policy require updating and ratifying to reflect the school's current practices. You have rightly identified that this should be actioned immediately. You ensure that teachers and support staff receive regular, appropriate safeguarding training, including in relation to newly emerging issues and their responsibilities linked to the government's 'Prevent' duty. Staff describe ensuring

the safety and well-being of pupils as one of their most important duties. There is an ethos communicated by them that, no matter how small, everything is important to report. Teachers and teaching assistants I spoke with were highly knowledgeable and very clear in their understanding of how to identify and report any concerns.

Inspection evidence, including school records and a discussion with a representative from the local authority, indicates that rapid and substantial improvements have been made to the school's records relating to child protection issues. Meticulously kept child protection files now contain a range of valuable information and a precise chronology. The designated senior leader has worked successfully to ensure that historic gaps in the information contained within the records have been eliminated. All files are now up to date and thorough and reflect improving practice throughout the school. Likewise, the single central record and personnel files now contain all the information needed to ensure that adults employed at the school are appropriately checked and eligible to work with children.

Pupils typically behave well. The vast majority move sensibly around the large, well-maintained site. Pupils respect each other and are polite and courteous, for example holding open doors and saying 'excuse me' to each other and adults as they walk past. Pupils work together at the start of the school year to establish class and school rules. It is evident that these rules are already well established, and pupils are confident about what is expected of them.

You have introduced a new approach to behaviour management which focuses on getting children to think and communicate well. Staff talk positively about this approach and the impact on pupils to take greater responsibility for their behaviour and 'think better for themselves'. I observed a number of classroom assistants effectively applying these techniques well to settle and encourage pupils who experience difficulties in managing their own behaviour. On each occasion, the pupil was successfully re-engaged in their learning within minutes.

Pupils told me that not all adults listen or take their concerns seriously. Parents also have similar concerns and feel that bullying, especially on the key stage 2 playground, is not effectively managed. While pupils are confident they have at least one adult they can talk to and who they trust to deal with unkind behaviour, many say that they sometimes feel unsafe on the playground because there are so many children there, and they often get bumped or knocked. Discussions with staff also highlight some concerns around their capacity to supervise playtimes effectively due to the large space and numbers of children. I observed playtimes and reviewed behaviour logs. Leaders have introduced a new zoning system to the playground to try and overcome some of the issues, but it is too early to evaluate its effectiveness. Behaviour logs, including those relating to bullying, are comprehensive and staff are vigilant at filling them in. Follow-up actions are clearly recorded and link appropriately to the behaviour. Leaders are able to quickly draw upon data relating to racism, e-safety and child protection concerns. The system for recording bullying incidents is not as robust.

You have increased the focus on the importance of pupils attending school. Overall attendance is now in line with the national average. Leaders' careful monitoring of attendance, meetings with families and biweekly work with the external attendance officer have led to improving attendance overall and a reduction, for individual at-risk pupils, in the proportion of time they are persistently absent. Your decision to remove part-time timetables means that all pupils are now receiving full-time education and the most vulnerable pupils are no longer disadvantaged by poor attendance. While monitoring is very precise for individual pupils, leaders are not able to provide concise information relating to the tracking of specific groups. Therefore, they are not fully aware if there are emerging trends.

Teachers' work to promote pupils' awareness of e-safety and other aspects of personal, social and health education is strong. Pupils describe in detail how to keep themselves safe online, how to live healthy lifestyles and how to deal with bullying. Pupils are also very clear on the importance of whole-school safety matters such as fire drill practice. Pupils, including the very youngest children, told inspectors where they had to go if they heard the fire bell and how they should 'walk quietly and sensibly'. The newly established school council includes members from the youngest to the oldest pupils, and is selected through a democratic process which the pupils proudly explained.

External support

School leaders make good use of a wide range of external agencies. The newly appointed designated senior lead for safeguarding has quickly established effective working relationships with external partners. This ensures that a good quality of care is available for pupils and their families, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities.

You and the leaders responsible for various aspects of safeguarding, including child protection, attendance and staff recruitment, work effectively alongside the local authority and, in particular, have benefited from the monitoring and supervision support provided by NET Academies Trust. This joint partnership has rapidly accelerated the rate of progress you have made in ensuring that safeguarding procedures, particularly in regard to establishing more precise and robust record-keeping, are now effective.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that all policies relating to safeguarding, including those that are required to be published on the school's website, are reviewed and ratified to reflect changes to school practice.
- Maximise the potential of the new behaviour logs so that emerging trends in behaviour, including bullying, can be identified quickly and addressed.
- Provide staff with appropriate training and support so that they have the skills to

manage conflict and keep pupils safe, especially on the playground.

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

Yours sincerely

Kerry Grubb-Moore
Her Majesty's Inspector