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Mr J Kane
Headteacher
Bradford District Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)
Anerley Street
Bradford
West Yorkshire
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Dear Mr Kane

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Bradford District PRU

Following my visit with Suzette Garland-Grimes, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 1 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 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 the school's safeguarding arrangements.

Evidence

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements, the school's documentation on pupils' attendance and behaviour, and the report from a safeguarding audit undertaken by the local authority. Inspectors visited two of the six external providers used by the school: Training and Skills Centre and Prism Independent School. Both of these providers are independent schools. The inspection team met with the headteacher, pupils, staff and middle leaders, two national leaders of education (NLEs) who are currently supporting the school, the management committee member responsible for safeguarding and a representative of the local authority. The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with the chair of the management committee.

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

Safeguarding is not effective.

Context

Bradford District PRU is a pupil referral unit which meets the needs of pupils aged between 14 and 16 years who have been permanently excluded from mainstream or special schools. At the time of the inspection, there were 94 pupils on roll. The number of pupils fluctuates, as most pupils arrive at times other than the start of the school year.

The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is higher than the national average, as is the proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding. Approximately one third of pupils have identified special educational needs (SEN). Of these, approximately one quarter have education, health and care plans.

The continuous fluctuation in the numbers of pupils attending the provision has led to changes to staffing levels since the previous inspection. When pupil numbers rise, school leaders rely on temporary staff to meet pupils' needs.

The Bradford District PRU was placed in special measures following the inspection which took place in March 2017. The school's safeguarding arrangements were judged to be ineffective and all aspects of the school's work were judged to be inadequate.

Inspection findings

You, the associate headteacher and other members of the leadership team are aware of the issues facing the school and have made a start on the road to improvement. However, insufficient progress has been made towards tackling the shortcomings in safeguarding identified in the previous inspection report.

While staff recognise that safeguarding pupils is everyone's responsibility, the recording of incidents and information has been haphazard in the recent past. This has not been helped by changes in staff. Currently, the quality of record-keeping is more accurate and systems are being used more effectively. However, there remain a significant number of entries in records which need to be completed and followed up. You recognise that this needs immediate action to ensure the overall safety and welfare of pupils.

Staff believe that pupils' behaviour has improved recently. However, at times, behaviour observed during the inspection presented a different picture. While some pupils were keen to engage in learning, others still displayed negative attitudes in the classroom and on corridors. Pupils sometimes disturbed others' learning and

often used inappropriate language. The behaviour team know pupils well and work hard to increase their cooperation, but at times pupils' behaviour remains a significant concern.

The logging of incidents of difficult behaviour is not consistent because staff do not always complete the required records. Sometimes, there is confusion about where an incident should be logged. This lack of consistency makes it difficult for leaders to accurately assess improvement in the behaviour of individual pupils and to identify the causes of dips in their behaviour.

Approximately one third of pupils have identified SEN. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has put clear systems in place to ensure that reviews of pupils' needs are carried out regularly. This task takes much of her time and effort. As a result, she is not using her knowledge and skills to help staff to meet the additional needs of pupils. At times, this contributes to their difficult behaviour. You and other senior leaders have recognised this issue, and very recently additional administration time has been allocated to the SENCo in order to assist her in her duties.

The very recent changes to the management committee, including the appointment of a new chair, are bringing about a more strategic approach to school improvement. Several new members have joined, all of whom have recent and relevant educational experience. However, only one meeting of the new committee has taken place so far. Discussions held with the chair of the management committee during the inspection showed that members do not have robust oversight of the school's safeguarding arrangements.

Progress has been made in improving pupils' attendance. The attendance officer has shown much tenacity and determination in developing an understanding of the underlying issues and barriers which reduce pupils' attendance. He clearly recognises that low attendance increases the risks facing pupils and has put in place a range of different strategies to increase attendance. For example, minibuses are now provided to pick pupils up from a range of different locations. This reduces the temptation for some to stay in town and not come to school. Your team's focus on meeting the needs of individuals has also increased attendance. Developing stronger relationships with parents and supporting them to ensure that their children attend school regularly has also helped. Despite this improvement, school leaders recognise that there is more to be done in order to increase levels of attendance and bring them closer to national expectations.

Since the previous inspection, you have worked hard to reduce the school's reliance on alternative provision. You and the associate headteacher have also developed stronger relationships with the leaders and managers of the alternative providers currently used. You have developed a more effective system to quality assure and support staff in the alternative providers. For example, the joint provision of safeguarding training has proved to be effective in increasing the knowledge and

understanding of staff in these settings.

External support

The local authority has carried out an extensive safeguarding audit, which clearly details the key safeguarding issues in the school. You and your leadership team have gone some way to addressing the issues raised. You are aware that there is more to be done.

Wisely, you have recently sought advice and support from two national leaders of education in order to increase your leadership capacity. This partnership is at a very early stage and, as a result, it is not possible to assess the impact of their work.

You have also appointed a seconded assistant headteacher from Huddersfield to increase your leadership capacity. His work on developing strategies to improve attendance is also at an early stage of development and it is too soon to see its full impact.

Priorities for further improvement

- Increase the effectiveness of recording incidents of difficult behaviour by ensuring that staff are clear about what they are required to record.
- Ensure that systems for recording safeguarding information are rigorously applied and that missing information is entered into the online system as a matter of urgency.
- Continue to improve pupils' behaviour by ensuring that staff have a clear understanding of how to meet their SEN in the classroom.
- Increase the role played by the management committee in supporting and challenging senior leaders, in order to accelerate improvement across the school.
- Continue to work closely with alternative providers in order to improve the quality of education offered to pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Marian Thomas
Her Majesty's Inspector