

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



8 May 2018

Mrs Pat Baxter
Acting Headteacher
Roman Way First School
Burns Road
Royston
Hertfordshire
SG8 5EQ

Dear Mrs Baxter

No formal designation inspection of Roman Way First School

Following my visit to your school on 25 April 2018, 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 at the school.

Evidence

I scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements, pupils' attendance and behaviour. I met with you; other senior leaders; a group of six teachers; a group of 14 teaching assistants; three members of the school's administration team; two midday supervisors; the family support worker; a group of nine pupils; and two governors, including the chair of the governing body. I held telephone discussions with the vice-chair of the governing body and with a representative of the local authority. During a tour of the school I visited each class to observe pupils as they worked. I spoke with pupils informally during lessons and at breaktime and I spoke with parents at the start of the school day.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

Context

Roman Way First School is a slightly smaller than average-sized primary school

which provides education for 235 pupils. The school operates two part-time nursery classes and two Reception classes. Pupils in key stages 1 and 2 are taught in single- and mixed-aged classes. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups in school is low. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average, while the proportion who are eligible for the pupil premium is in line with the national average.

Since the previous inspection, two new teachers have joined the school and one has left. Two parent governors have joined the governing body. The school has also set up a safeguarding team, which is made up of yourself and two governors. This team meets monthly and has met three times.

Main findings

Since the previous inspection, you and your leaders have rightly taken swift and successful action to bring about the changes needed to ensure that safeguarding is effective. You have made sure that adults have an unwavering focus on ensuring that pupils' well-being is central to their work.

Pupils told me that they feel safe at school. They explained that this is because teachers 'look out for us' and school is a happy place in which to learn. Pupils understand the difference between falling out and bullying. Those I spoke with found it hard to recall any incidents of bullying at their school. Pupils told me that if any incidents were to occur, they were confident staff would deal with them well. Pupils also explained that if they had any concerns or worries they would feel comfortable speaking with adults in school. Pupils appreciate the additional sense of security brought by recent improvements made to the school site. Parents I spoke with told me that their children were safe, happy and well cared for.

Working closely with the local authority, you have made sure that all necessary checks are carried out on staff who work at the school. The single central record of staff appointments is carefully and accurately maintained. You have provided administrative staff with good-quality training relating to safeguarding. They have a clear understanding of the checks that need to be carried out and, importantly, the reasons why these checks should be undertaken. As one member of staff commented, 'We know what we need to do and why we need to do it.' You also carry out more scrutiny of the school's records relating to safeguarding. Governors on the school's newly formed safeguarding team are diligent in making sure that records are well maintained. In addition, the local authority has carried out an audit of this aspect of the school's safeguarding documentation.

At the time of the previous inspection, you were asked to improve staff and governors' knowledge and understanding of safeguarding guidance and practice. You were also asked to ensure that staff were appropriately trained in the school's own systems and processes. You have rightly made this a central focus of your work. Staff I spoke with explained that they feel more confident and better

equipped to carry out their important safeguarding responsibilities. One member of staff told me, 'We are more up to date and aware.' Inspection evidence endorses this view. Staff attribute these improvements to the training and support that you and your leaders have provided since the previous inspection.

Teachers and teaching assistants clearly understand your expectation that safeguarding pupils' well-being is everyone's responsibility. To reinforce this expectation, you provide adults with appropriate training and regular, frequent safeguarding updates in staff meetings. Adults, who know pupils well, are alert to any changes in behaviour, attitude or appearance that may indicate that a pupil is vulnerable or at risk. Staff are familiar with the process they must follow to report any concerns they may have. They correctly recognise the importance of accurately and promptly recording the details of their concerns and referring them on in a timely way. Staff also told me that they are encouraged to check that leaders have acted after concerns have been passed on to them.

Leaders' well-kept records confirm staff views that designated safeguarding leaders act on reported concerns promptly and well. You and the school's family support worker make sure that when a pupil or their family need help, they receive it. You work closely with external agencies to make certain that this support is appropriate to pupils' or their families' specific needs.

Governors have received additional safeguarding training from the local authority. Individual governors have the improved knowledge and understanding they need to monitor the school's safeguarding practice. Through the work of the safeguarding team, governors have an accurate understanding of the systems now in place. However, the governing body needs to improve the effectiveness with which it gathers pupils', parents' and staff's views as to the impact of these improved systems. In some areas, governors are still over-reliant on what they are told by leaders and external agencies.

The governing body has undergone an external review since the previous inspection. Governors are in the process of drawing up an action plan to ensure that the recommendations of this review are acted upon. Governors and the local authority are aware that they need to accelerate the pace of this work.

You have acted to improve the level of consistency with which staff deal with incidents of poor behaviour and promote positive behaviour. Your new behaviour policy is underpinned by your chosen values of 'Ready, respectful and safe'. Pupils and staff already understand and willingly subscribe to these values. Pupils told me that adults' consistent use of these values is 'making school an even nicer place to be'. Pupils also explained that the number of incidents of poor behaviour have fallen, and learning is, more often than not, able to proceed uninterrupted. Staff agreed that this approach is bringing greater clarity and consistency in adults' management of pupils' behaviour. Staff also told me how much they value being able to contribute to the ongoing refinements and tweaks being made to this policy

and practice. Evidence from lesson visits, school records and discussions with pupils and staff demonstrate that pupil behaviour is typically good, and relationships are based on good-humoured respect.

You have acted to support the small number of pupils who find it hard to make the correct behaviour choices. Your leaders have carefully drawn up support plans for individual pupils. Staff told me that the training they are provided with means that they are increasingly well equipped to help these pupils improve their behaviour. In addition, you have provided pupils with a wider range of activities at lunchtimes, so that those who need more structured support receive it. The impact of your actions can be seen in the improvement in the behaviour of pupils who receive this help.

Pupils' attendance remains too low and the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is too high. The coherent, energetic leadership that has brought about improvements in the school's safeguarding practice is not evident in actions to improve pupils' attendance. While leaders track each pupil's attendance carefully and take appropriate steps to establish why a pupil is absent, they do not act quickly enough when pupils' attendance declines over time. Governors have not ensured that the school's attendance policy is up to date and reflects the highest expectations for pupils' attendance.

External support

You are making appropriate use of external support to ensure that the school's safeguarding practice is effective. For example, the local authority has provided good-quality safeguarding training for staff and governors since the previous inspection. You have also responded well to the findings of external audits of the school's safeguarding practice to make further necessary improvements.

Priorities for further improvement

- Raise pupils' attendance and reduce the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent, by reviewing and making necessary improvements to the school's attendance policy and practice.
- Ensure that leaders, including governors, frequently and regularly review the impact of their work to improve safeguarding policy and practice.
- Swiftly act upon the findings of the external review of governance.

Yours sincerely

John Lucas

Her Majesty's Inspector