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9 May 2018

Megan Stratton
Headteacher
St Clare's School
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Dear Ms Stratton

No formal designation inspection of St Clare's School

Following my visit with Janis Warren and John Edwards, Ofsted Inspectors, to your school on 17 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 wished to determine the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements at the school.

Evidence

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. Inspectors met with the headteacher, the three assistant headteachers, a group of teachers, two groups of learning support assistants, two groups of pupils, parents and carers at the beginning of the school day, three governors, including the chair of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority.

Inspectors reviewed the school's development plan and self-evaluation document, the local authority's safeguarding audit, headteacher reports to the governing body, governing body minutes, records related to attendance, behaviour and exclusions, and risk assessments of school visits. Inspectors observed learning in all classes, as well as observing pupils at breaktime and at lunchtime.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

Context

This is a special school. The school has 114 pupils. Nearly two-thirds of pupils are boys. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is just over double the national average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is just above the national average. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is just below the national average. Pupil mobility is high.

The headteacher leads safeguarding very well. She is highly committed to ensuring that pupils are kept safe. This commitment is equally demonstrated by all staff. Teachers and learning support assistants are highly vigilant and quickly identify if a pupil's behaviour is different from the norm and causes concern. They report their concerns promptly. Leaders discuss the concerns and take swift and appropriate action to resolve them. However, the school's system for filing the paperwork around individual cases is not helpful to leaders, who need to be able to construct chronologies of events in respect of individual cases. All parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and who spoke to the inspectors said their child was safe at school.

All staff are very knowledgeable about safeguarding matters. There is a planned programme of both face-to-face and online training, to ensure that the staff's knowledge is kept up to date. All staff are very aware that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. The processes for the administration of medicines are thorough. All dosages are checked by another adult before being administered to a pupil. All the required checks on the staff's suitability to work in schools have been completed.

The pupils are very respectful towards the staff and the relationships between the pupils and staff are very positive. Staff have recently benefited from training to support pupils' emotional and mental health. A common language to discuss a pupils' emotional well-being has been introduced to allow effective communication between the pupils and the staff. Pupils are encouraged to judge their own emotional well-being in the morning. If a pupil is not in a positive frame of mind, the staff encourage them to take action to improve their emotional well-being. Pupils have responded well to this and have been able to modify their emotions positively. Pupils are very confident that staff will support them well if they need help to resolve emotional and other difficulties.

Staff supervise the pupils well. Pupils are warmly greeted as they arrive at school by learning support assistants. Pupils' arrival and departure from school is very orderly and calm. Pupils told the inspectors that there are always many staff available at

breaktimes and lunchtimes to talk to them and support them. At lunchtime, there are a wide range of clubs, including dance club, basketball and an IT club, all of which pupils enjoy. If pupils become agitated on the playground, or have issues with low self-esteem, pupils can go to the pastoral room for support.

The school's personal, social and health curriculum enables pupils to have a good understanding of the dangers of substance misuse and the potential dangers of being online. The school has worked successfully with the local authority and other schools in order to develop a drugs awareness programme. Pupils throughout the school are taught about the dangers of drugs. As part of safer-internet day, pupils learned how to surf the internet safely. Pupils have analysed social media, and investigated positive and negative views and images. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online and know to report any worrying signs to an adult.

Pupils report that incidents of bullying are rare. The school participates in anti-bullying week and has discussed and signed up to the theme, 'All Equal. All different'. Relationships between pupils are positive in lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes.

The proportion of fixed-term exclusions has risen gradually in the last two years and is just above the national average. A number of the exclusions related to boys who were placed at the school during key stage 4. Nevertheless, the school has worked hard with individual pupils to improve their behaviour and there have been some notable successes. There have been no permanent exclusions since the previous inspection.

The preparation for school trips is thorough. Detailed risk assessments are completed and accompanying staff are made aware of the individual needs of the pupils. Special arrangements are implemented to ensure that medication is properly administered for those pupils who require it. Pupils' health and care plans are taken by staff to ensure that all needs are met. Staff sit with the pupils on the buses to check pupils' well-being. Pupils say they enjoy the visits.

The governing body is very active in the life of the school. All governors are linked to classes and visit the school at least termly. During their visits, they talk with the pupils and staff to check there are no concerns. Governors also accompany the staff and pupils on school visits. One governor regularly checks the single central record. Safeguarding is discussed at every governing body meeting and governors will raise issues that come to their attention. However, governors are not informed about the results of the senior leaders' annual audit of safeguarding and, therefore, cannot challenge leaders to check if identified areas for improvement have been resolved in a timely manner.

Pupils' attendance is good. Attendance has risen in the current year and is above last year's national average for similar schools. The attendance of disadvantaged

pupils is higher than the national average of all pupils, although lower than the attendance for other pupils at the school. The school tracks attendance closely and has targeted the work of the education welfare officer to support those pupils who are at risk of low attendance. As a result, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is currently well below last year's national average.

External support

The local authority adviser conducted a thorough review of safeguarding in October 2016. She has subsequently checked that actions required following the review have been completed satisfactorily. The adviser has provided good support for the school.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that case files have a clear chronology of all actions taken to keep pupils safe so that all authorised personnel can access the records easily.
- Ensure that governors receive and discuss the results of the annual audit of safeguarding to assist them to support and challenge school leaders.

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

Yours sincerely

Martin Finch
Her Majesty's Inspector