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Mr Keith Prytherch
Northallerton School & Sixth Form College
Grammar School Lane
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North Yorkshire
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Dear Mr Prytherch

No formal designation inspection of Northallerton School & Sixth Form College

Following my visit with Helen Lane, Senior Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 22 May 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

Inspectors observed the school's work, and scrutinised school documents, including safeguarding records and behaviour and attendance information. Inspectors met with the executive principal, associate principal, members of the senior leadership team, the chair of the interim executive board and the safeguarding governor. Inspectors also met with two representatives from the North Yorkshire Police, a superintendent who is also the chair of North Yorkshire Police Safeguarding Board and a detective chief inspector.

Inspectors held discussions with a group of staff and groups of pupils from Year 7 to Year 12. Inspectors talked informally with pupils during breaks and lunchtimes and visited lessons with senior leaders at both school sites. A telephone conversation was held with a representative from Hambleton and Richmondshire Pupil Referral Service.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time leaders are taking effective action to address the areas for improvement related to safeguarding.

Context

Since the school was last inspected, there have been a significant number of changes to staffing. A new interim executive principal and new associate principal were appointed in January 2018. Nine senior and middle leaders have left the school since the last inspection and one more will leave by August 2018. A new substantive principal and vice-principal will take up post in September 2018. A new attendance officer was appointed in February 2018. The governing body has been replaced with an interim executive board (IEB).

Following the last inspection, the very recently appointed interim executive principal and associate principal swiftly reviewed and restructured all leadership positions within the school. As a result, a number of senior and middle leaders have left the school, including the leaders responsible for safeguarding. A new experienced designated safeguarding leader and deputy safeguarding leader have been assigned to oversee safeguarding arrangements in the school. As a result, the leadership and management of the school, including the leadership of safeguarding, have improved.

Since the last inspection, the governing body has been replaced with an IEB. The IEB consists of experienced members with extensive business and education knowledge and expertise. As a result, governance has improved. The new chair of the IEB leads the group effectively, has established safeguarding as the top priority and is highly focused and committed to the rapid improvement of the school. An experienced IEB member has taken up the leadership of safeguarding. She is working closely with leaders and the local authority to review safeguarding processes and procedures. The new designated safeguarding leader has put together an action plan which governors support and closely monitor. Consequently, safeguarding arrangements have improved.

Following the last inspection, leaders and governors have reviewed the school's recruitment systems and procedures. They have introduced stronger accountability systems for staff involved in the recruitment process and strengthened the recording of information, including all appropriate checks. As a result, all appointments since the last inspection have followed effective safer recruitment practice.

The new safeguarding leader and deputy safeguarding leader work closely with their safeguarding team, which includes all year-group leaders and the newly appointed attendance officer. They meet frequently to discuss vulnerable pupils. Newly introduced systems for recording safeguarding incidents have increased the accountability of staff. Inspection evidence indicates that safeguarding files comply with expectations. Information is recorded, and referrals are carried out in a timely way. Actions are followed up. There have been significant improvements in the work of the school with external agencies, including the police, social services, the local authority prevention team and the healthy child team. As a result, pupils

receive the help they need. Educational psychologists and counsellors also provide regular support to pupils. During the inspection, representatives from the North Yorkshire Police commented very positively on the school's 'child-centred approach' to safeguarding.

Leaders have ensured that all staff and governors have appropriate and up-to-date safeguarding training, including training to recognise radicalisation and extremism. Staff know what to do if they have any concerns. Improved coordination of safeguarding referrals and regular safeguarding meetings mean that staff are vigilant and regularly monitor vulnerable pupils in the school.

Since the last inspection, leaders have introduced a revised behaviour policy with a 'zero tolerance' on bullying. They have raised expectations for staff and pupils. Leaders have introduced a range of initiatives, such as peer mentoring and restorative practice, to support pupils to improve their behaviour. The school is working closely with North Yorkshire Police to raise pupils' awareness about the effects of bullying, online safety and safe use of social media. Pupils described the assemblies and tutor times focused on online safety in recent weeks. This work was observed in tutor times during the inspection.

Leaders have introduced an additional 16 sixth-form students who support the monitoring of good behaviour as lunchtime supervisors. All pupils and sixth-form students who spoke with inspectors said that behaviour has improved since the last inspection and that they feel safe in school. Inspection evidence supports this. However, a very small minority of parents reported concerns over the behaviour and safety of pupils at the school and about the way that leaders have dealt with some bullying issues.

Pupils know what to do if they have any concerns and appreciate the work sixth-form students do to ensure that behaviour is improving in the school. During the inspection, the atmosphere around both school sites was calm and pupils interacted well with their peers and staff. In the classrooms visited on the learning walks, the majority of pupils were engaged in their learning. Pupils' presentation showed that most took pride in their work. The chair of the IEB confirmed that behaviour is calmer and that relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff have improved since January.

Leaders have improved the systems for recording and monitoring behaviour incidents. They recognise that further work is needed to allow leaders and the IEB to fully evaluate the impact of their support strategies for all groups of pupils. Following the raised expectations on behaviour, fixed-term exclusions and permanent exclusions have increased since the last inspection. Leaders are fully aware of the need to reduce fixed-term exclusions. As a result of improvements in behaviour, the number of lesson removals and the time pupils spend in isolation have reduced. Staff appreciate helpful training on behaviour management. They report that behaviour has improved since the last inspection. They say that they feel

well supported by leaders, and that behaviour, in classrooms and out of lessons, is now much more positive.

Since the inspection, leaders and governors have appointed a new attendance officer, who is also part of the safeguarding team. The attendance team has begun to track and monitor the attendance of all groups of pupils. Leaders have raised the profile of attendance around the school through attendance displays, newsletters and rewards systems. There has been some improvement in the attendance and persistent absence of all pupils, including the disadvantaged pupils, but overall, attendance remains well below national averages. Leaders are aware of the need to continue to improve attendance at a more rapid pace.

External support

The local authority provides support for the school. The school improvement adviser knows the school well and monitors school improvements regularly. The local authority has brokered the appointment of the interim leadership team and the IEB and has supported the school with post-inspection planning. The local authority has also provided appropriate safeguarding training for staff and governors. As a result of this support, and through working closely with the interim executive principal, the local authority has contributed to the improvements in the culture and ethos of the school.

Priorities for further improvement

- Leaders continue to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence at a more rapid pace for all pupils, including the disadvantaged.
- Continue to improve the recording and analysis of behaviour incidents, including bullying.
- Continue to reduce the number of behaviour incidents and the number of fixed-term exclusions for all pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Dimitris Spiliotis
Her Majesty's Inspector