

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



16 July 2018

Mr Andrew Pugh  
Castle Hall Academy  
Richard Thorpe Avenue  
Crowlees Road  
Mirfield  
West Yorkshire  
WF14 9PH

Dear Mr Pugh

### **No formal designation inspection of Castle Hall Academy**

Following my visit with Kate Rowley, Her Majesty's Inspector, Carl Sugden, Ofsted Inspector and Gordon Watts, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 10 July 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 scrutinised the single central record and other documents and policies relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. They met with you, senior leaders and year leaders. Inspectors met with a group of staff, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), the designated safeguarding lead and a governor. Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils both formally and informally. An inspector had a telephone conversation with a representative from the alternative provision used by the school.

Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of information provided by the school. This included school risk assessments, governors' minutes, attendance and behaviour information, as well as the school's arrangements for following up absence and incidents. The school's action plans were scrutinised as part of the visit. Inspectors observed behaviour between lessons, during breaktime and lunchtime, and they

visited a sample of lessons to check on behaviour, safety and attitudes to learning.

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

the arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **Context**

Castle Hall Academy is an average-sized secondary school. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is at the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is below the national average. The vast majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above the national average.

Since the section 5 inspection in November 2016, when the school was judged to require special measures, there have been a number of changes to the senior and middle leadership teams. In addition, there has been a change in the chair of the governing body along with the recruitment of a new parent governor in January 2018.

It is planned that the school will become a sponsored academy on 1 September 2018, as part of the Impact Education Multi Academy Trust. There has been a review of governance and, as a result, the governing body has changed the ways in which it holds leaders to account. There has also been a review of the pupil premium spending.

## **Inspection findings**

You and other leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The school's policies are comprehensive. All staff are very familiar with them, which is reflected in their practice. The school has detailed records and information for those pupils who are vulnerable. The records enable referrals to be made to appropriate external agencies and incidents to be dealt with in a timely and effective manner.

Leaders have established effective links with relevant outside agencies including the local authority. These agencies provide appropriate advice, guidance and support when dealing with pupils and families who face challenging circumstances. The school's records provide detail of the work and actions carried out in partnership with these agencies and, as a result, leaders can act quickly when concerns are brought to their attention.

A strength of your safeguarding arrangements is that in addition to the designated safeguarding lead, several staff have been appropriately trained as deputy designated safeguarding leads and are able to talk and discuss knowledgeably about the school's records, current causes for concern, and the impact of their actions.

Staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding and receive timely and appropriate training. They are clear that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and understand and use the school's procedures effectively to keep children safe. This was evident in Year 8 design and technology lessons where teachers' expectations of pupils' safety were a strength. Pupils were well briefed on the use of practical resources and how to work safely with them. They handled equipment safely. Equally, the arrangements for managing the risks associated with practical work in science are robust and well managed by the technical support available in the science department.

Leaders are aware of the challenges and barriers that face young people in school and in the local community. As a result, leaders have developed a series of alternative curriculum days through which the personal, social, health and economic education programme is mainly delivered. This programme is supported through further work in tutor periods. The programme covers staying safe in a variety of contexts including the use of social media, substance abuse and the issues surrounding bullying. A strength of the programme is the focus on radicalisation; as a result, pupils talk confidently about their responsibilities in this area.

Procedures are in place for checking visitors' suitability to work with children as they enter the school site. Visitors and staff are clearly identified by wearing different coloured lanyards.

Governors take their safeguarding role seriously. They have accessed appropriate training, and, because of this, are knowledgeable about safeguarding procedures. Governors have ensured that all policies are up to date with current guidance. The procedures for the safer recruitment of staff are robust, from advert to appointment.

Pupils say they feel safe at school. Pupils are aware of who to speak to if bullying occurs and they state that if bullying does take place, most of them are confident that it will be dealt with effectively by a member of staff. Pupils believe that staff are approachable and helpful. Several pupils praised the support they had been given and the care shown by the school, which had enabled them to overcome challenging times in their school career. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are well supported in their lessons and are provided with learning opportunities which are designed to support their needs. Most pupils are respectful to visitors and are keen to share their views. A minority do exhibit behaviour which can be described as bravado, although they are not discourteous when doing so.

The school site is complex and presents leaders with challenges in terms of supervision. Staff presence on corridors and stairwells is high between lessons and during break and lunchtimes. During the inspection, the school site was an orderly environment. At times, behaviour was boisterous but managed well by supervising staff.

Most pupils are attentive and compliant in lessons. On occasion, pupils were not as cooperative or engaged in the learning as they should be. Where pupils demonstrate positive attitudes, they engage in activities, want to achieve well and take pride in their work.

You and other leaders have put in place a range of strategies to address the weaknesses in pupils' behaviour and attendance. In September 2017, a new behaviour system was launched. Pupils say the system has helped to improve behaviour in most classrooms.

Very few pupils attend alternative provision. For those pupils who do, a designated member of staff is responsible for keeping a close check on their welfare and attendance.

You and other leaders have not been complacent about attendance and it is clear from the evidence presented to inspectors that the school has worked tirelessly to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence. Leaders monitor and track key pupils closely. As a result, leaders provide appropriate support to pupils and families to encourage more regular attendance. Strategies such as first-day contact, home visits, the use of the school's learning support unit, governors' attendance panels and the issue of fixed-penalty notices are used to alert, support and challenge parents about the importance of their children attending school regularly. The rigour of the leaders' actions in this respect also ensures that, wherever possible, the school is aware of where pupils are when they are not attending. When leaders do not acquire the information they need, they swiftly work in partnership with outside agencies, including the local authority, to prompt the appropriate actions for a child who is missing from education.

Leaders are aware that more work needs to be done to further improve the attendance of pupils, particularly the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.

### **External support**

The school has worked closely with the local authority in relation to safeguarding procedures, policies and protocols. As a result, safeguarding continues to be effective. Since the previous inspection, a review of governance has also taken place, resulting in a change of governance procedures. A pupil premium review has also taken place.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Leaders, including governors, should more rigorously monitor, evaluate and review their actions to ensure that the behaviour of pupils improves further.
- Leaders should continue and develop their actions to improve the attendance and reduce persistent absenteeism of pupils, particularly boys, disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.

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

Yours sincerely

Barry Found  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**