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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Tina Blankley
Headteacher
Chancel Primary School
Wolseley Road
Rugeley
Staffordshire
WS15 2EW

Dear Mrs Blankley

No formal designation inspection of Chancel Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 27 February 2019, 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 and aspects of the effectiveness of leadership and management in the school, including governance.

Evidence

I considered evidence that included:

- scrutinising the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements
- discussions with the headteacher, school staff, parents and the chair of the governing body
- examining a sample of pupils' work from Year 6 and Year 3
- scrutinising minutes of governing body meetings, school policies and records of the local authority's moderation of the 2018 national assessments for Year 2 and Year 6.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

Context

There are 212 pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below the national average. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is also average, as is the number with education, health and care plans. Pupils usually join the school in the Nursery and Reception classes. A few join part-way through key stages 1 and 2. Most pupils remain at the school until the end of Year 6. Most staff have worked at the school for several years, although there has been some turnover of administrative staff in recent years.

The leadership and management of the school

Leaders ensure that staff take their responsibility for pupils' safety and well-being very seriously. A culture of care and vigilance towards pupils' welfare exists across the school. All policies associated with safeguarding contain the latest guidance and are accessible for parents on the school's website. Leaders review policies annually to ensure that they are fit for purpose. In addition, leaders update and amend policies in response to any weaknesses found. For example, leaders have tightened up guidance for staff on the use of closed-circuit television images of the school site following a recent incident. In this way, leaders seek continually to refine procedures so that any risk to pupils is as small as possible.

Recruitment checks are thorough. The single central record of staff information is well organised and complies with government requirements. The headteacher checks this record regularly to ensure that only those who have been fully vetted work in the school.

As the designated safeguarding leader, the headteacher is knowledgeable and fully trained in child protection procedures. She is ably supported by her deputy. Other senior leaders are due, shortly, to be trained to a similarly high level to further strengthen the team's expertise. Together, the designated safeguarding leads provide good training and support for staff. As a result, staff are vigilant to signs that all may not be well with a pupil and pass on any worries straight away in the correct manner. Leaders act swiftly in response to any referrals made by staff and seek appropriate advice and guidance. Leaders work effectively with other professional agencies to support pupils and families and keep them safe. Records are stored securely and contain a suitable chronology of events depicting causes for concern raised.

Leaders have very high expectations for the quality of education to be provided by

the school. They recruit talented teachers, often at the beginning of their careers. Leaders provide a great deal of professional development and training to help teachers become highly skilled practitioners and to move into leadership roles. Teachers value these opportunities highly. They commit much time and effort into putting the advice they receive into practice. As a result, the quality of education is strong and pupils enjoy their learning very much.

Some staff do not feel as well supported by leaders. They do not believe that leaders treat everyone equally. There is no evidence that leaders discriminate between different groups of staff or against any as individuals. However, the perception exists. Leaders are aware of it to some extent, but have not acted effectively to address the issues that cause it.

One feature of the effective quality of education is shown in the results of national assessments for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 for reading, writing and mathematics. In the last three years, pupils' scores have been very high compared to the national average. For example, in 2018 every Year 6 pupil reached the expected standard for 11-year-olds in reading. Almost half went on to achieve standards higher than this.

These results come from a combination of teachers' assessments of pupils' work and standardised national tests. For Year 2 pupils, the judgements are wholly based on teachers' assessments. The same approach is used for writing at Year 6. In addition to this, pupils sit tests in reading and mathematics. Leaders ensure that teachers' assessments at Chancel are accurate and that the high scores are a true reflection of pupils' achievements. Throughout the year, staff compare the quality of their pupils' work with that of those in local schools. Teachers across the schools check that everyone's judgement aligns to give consistency and accuracy. This is a process known as 'moderation'. In addition, the local authority moderates the assessments in a sample of schools each year. In 2018, the local authority moderated the results for reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 1 and those for writing in key stage 2 at Chancel. This process confirmed the accuracy of the school's judgements and verified the above-national-average results. Pupils' current work in Year 3 shows that they did, indeed, leave Year 2 working at high standards for their ages. They are building well on these impressive starting points. The work of pupils in Year 6 shows that standards in key stage 2 continue to be high.

Priorities for further improvement

- Leaders should ensure that all staff feel well treated and that the perception of inequality is eradicated.

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

Yours sincerely

Sandra Hayes
Her Majesty's Inspector