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10 October 2019

Mr Nick Morley
The East Principal
TBAP Cambridge AP Academy
Ascham Road
Cambridge
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Dear Mr Morley

No formal designation inspection of TBAP Cambridge AP Academy

Following my visit with Kay Leach, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 19 September 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This 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, as concerns had been raised with Ofsted about the effectiveness of leadership and management in the school (including governance), behaviour and attitudes of pupils, and the personal development of pupils at the school.

Evidence

During our visit, we met with the principal, the head of school, senior leaders, staff, a group of pupils, the chief executive of the trust and a representative of the local authority. I also spoke to a representative of the local authority by telephone.

We scrutinised the single central record and a range of documentation provided by school leaders. The documentation included information about safeguarding pupils and child protection arrangements, behaviour, attendance and exclusion data, and service-level agreements with alternative providers. We scrutinised curriculum plans for personal, social, health and economic education, and the actions taken to maintain pupils' behaviour and welfare. We visited lessons to observe pupils' behaviour. We observed pupils' conduct during lunchtime.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

Context

TBAP Cambridge AP Academy converted to become an alternative provision school on 1 October 2015. The academy joined the Tri-Borough Alternative Provision Trust (TBAP), a multi-academy trust.

There are 16 pupils on roll. Most pupils are White British. Most pupils have social, emotional or mental health needs. No pupils currently at the school have an education, health and care plan.

The most recent Ofsted inspection of the school was in September 2018, when the school was judged as requires improvement overall. The effectiveness of leadership and management was judged as requires improvement, and the personal development, behaviour and welfare were judged good.

There have been recent changes in the school's leadership. The executive headteacher left the school in June 2019. You became the principal in July 2019 and have quickly established your position. As of September 2019, the head of school returned full time, having spent time supporting the leadership and management of another TBAP school. The head of school is supported by a senior management team and takes responsibility for the safeguarding of pupils across the school. The head of school is held to account by you.

Safeguarding

Having had a local authority safeguarding audit in July 2019 that found concerns around safeguarding procedures and a letter from Ofsted about safeguarding issues raised from a complaint, leaders took action quickly. You, the head of school and the designated safeguarding leader have reviewed the effectiveness of the arrangements to safeguard pupils. You met with a local authority representative to draw up a 'rapid action plan' to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective. A result of the scrutiny has been a sharper focus on record-keeping in order to assess and address the risk of harm of each pupil. You commented that 'the local authority are welcome inside this building any time they want; we need their support.'

You are making sure that the provision for the safety of pupils is well led and managed. The trust has great confidence in your leadership. You have used your experience and shared your skills to make the improvements. Leaders show a thorough understanding of the school's context and the regular challenges this presents. Leaders and staff talk clearly about their safeguarding responsibilities and what to do to keep pupils safe. Staff are acutely aware that safeguarding pupils is everyone's responsibility, and the very recent training for staff has reinforced this.

An appropriate range of policies are available on the school's website and the trust's website. You have made sure that the most recent statutory guidance is reflected in the recently ratified policies. I noticed that the safeguarding policy did not include

the name of the deputy safeguarding leader, which you rectified before the end of the inspection.

The relevant employment checks are carried out on staff and recorded appropriately on the single central record. Staff are suitably trained and experienced in keeping children safe. The safeguarding leader and the head of school are trained as designated leaders for child protection. A third senior leader is due to receive the same level of training in November 2019.

We looked at your system for recording safeguarding concerns. There was some difficulty during the inspection in locating some information quickly due to a technological hitch. We sampled safeguarding case files to see how you are using information to keep pupils safe. You were able to demonstrate that record-keeping has improved in underpinning pupils' safety, but some information is not as accessible and detailed as it could be.

The staff confirmed that they have received extensive safeguarding training since the start of the autumn term. This training includes the 'Prevent' duty, domestic abuse awareness, safeguarding updates and the 'Keeping children safe in education' part 1, September 2019, requirement for staff. Staff are clear that they report every 'tiny' concern, as requested by the designated safeguarding leader. They know how to log any concerns and feel very well supported. They are knowledgeable about how to respond to any safeguarding disclosures made by pupils and can explain the circumstances surrounding the incidents they have logged. Staff said that there has been a 'great sea change' and that safeguarding pupils is now an absolute priority. They said that they have been well trained and feel very well informed. They said that there is always a trained designated safeguarding leader on site.

All pupils now attend the provision full time. The use of part-time timetables has ceased. Some pupils do not attend school often enough, and staff know that poor attendance adds to pupils' vulnerabilities. Staff telephone pupils before school and collect them in a minibus to encourage regular attendance and punctuality. The school tracks pupils' attendance closely. The attendance register is complete, accurate and up to date. Staff know where each pupil should be at any point during the school day. If any pupil is absent, correct procedures are in place to contact the relevant persons. For pupils attending alternative provision, the providers inform the school of any absence so that school staff can follow up the reasons why. Daily contact is made with the providers for up-to-date progress reports.

Each pupil has an individual alternative education plan, which details their needs, academic ability, the plan for alternative provision and the date of review. The plans capture the views of pupils and parents and carers, and their consent. Leaders carry out the relevant safeguarding checks on the alternative providers. The local authority's education inclusion officer has offered support to staff to ensure that plans and processes are effective and consistently applied. You have agreed to hold fortnightly inclusion meetings with local authority officers in order to work together to improve relationships with services, professionals and commissioning schools,

with a particular focus on maintaining effective safeguarding of pupils.

Staff and pupils are aware of the potential dangers existing outside of school, in the local community. Leaders are vigilant to these dangers. A comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education is an important part of the school's curriculum and focuses strongly on pupils' well-being. It helps to raise pupils' awareness of the risks attached to gang culture, knife crime, substance misuse and the risks associated with social networking sites.

Pupils are kept safe on site. Gates are locked and access to main doors is controlled. Pupils say that they feel safe and secure at school. They say that behaviour is good and that incidents of bullying are extremely rare. They feel that staff listen to them and act upon their concerns. One pupil commented, 'We all know each other well and get on well together.'

Prior to the local authority audit in July 2019, the school did not have in place a service-level agreement between the school and the alternative providers. This has now been rectified.

Governors and the trust board accept the seriousness of the safeguarding shortfalls last year. They are helping leaders to maintain the present improvements by providing appropriate support and challenge. The chief executive officer of TBAP is committed to maintaining a full-time head of school on site to drive improvement, and for staff to work closely with the local authority at every opportunity to ensure that pupils are kept safe.

External support

The local authority has provided timely support to secure improvements. This has helped you to reshape and tighten up systems for monitoring, recording and reporting any concerns about pupils' safety and well-being.

Priorities for further improvement

- Work closely with the local authority to sustain and embed the new approaches to keep pupils safe.
- Governors should ensure that safeguarding arrangements are monitored and scrutinised thoroughly, and that findings are acted upon effectively.
- Build leadership skills so that there is a shared understanding of and shared workload for safeguarding pupils.
- Improve the system for maintaining safeguarding records by recording the information meticulously and making it easier for authorised persons to retrieve the information.
- Make sure that pupils attend well, particularly the most vulnerable pupils.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive

officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cambridgeshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Stefanie Lipinski-Barltrop
Her Majesty's Inspector