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Mrs A Notta
Principal
The Khalsa Academy Wolverhampton
Millfields Road
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Dear Mrs Notta

No formal designation inspection of the Khalsa Academy Wolverhampton

Following my visit with Heather Simpson, Her Majesty's Inspector, and Gwendolyn Onyon, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 10 to 11 December 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, as concerns had been raised with Ofsted.

Evidence

My team and I scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements, as well as attendance, behaviour and exclusion records. We held meetings with the principal and other senior leaders, the designated safeguarding leader (DSL), who is the pastoral senior leader, and one of the two deputy DSLs. We held meetings about pupil premium funds and special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). An inspector visited an alternative provider on site and the internal isolation room. We met with groups of pupils, a group of staff, the chair of the local governing board and one other governor. I spoke to the chief executive officer (CEO) and a trustee of the Khalsa Trust on the telephone. I also reviewed complaints received by Ofsted and took into account reviews and letters from the local authority safeguarding team.

We all visited lessons and observed pupils at break, lunchtime and lesson changeover times. We spoke to pupils about how they learn to keep themselves safe and about what it is like to be a pupil at the academy. We scrutinised minutes of local governing board meetings, the principal's reports to the trust and the trust action plan for improving governance. I reviewed the actions taken by leaders following complaints.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

Context

There are 618 pupils on roll. This number has almost doubled since the previous inspection. This is due to the school now catering for pupils from Years 7 to 11, because the school opened with Year 7 pupils only and pupil numbers have increased, year on year, as pupils join in Year 7. Many pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds or speak English as an additional language. An increasing proportion of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils included in the register of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is broadly in line with the national average. There are two pupils in school currently with education, health and care plans (EHCPs).

A high number of staff took up their posts in September 2019. This reflects the fact that the academy has increased the number of pupils in Year 7 and the school population has grown, year on year, since it opened. The principal has been in post since November 2017. The chair of governors and several other members of the local governing board are new to their roles. The academy senior leadership team has recently been restructured.

Evidence

Since the last inspection, the Khalsa Academy Wolverhampton has moved into a modern, spacious building. Pupils say that this has helped to improve life in school and the quality of their education. Most pupils behave well. They are respectful towards each other and adults. Sikh values underpin leaders' high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils like the diverse range of ethnic backgrounds represented in the academy. We observed pupils at break times and in lessons mixing and working well together.

Many staff joined the academy in September 2019. Prior to this, supply teachers often covered lessons. Pupils say that these teachers did not always intervene when behaviour was poor. However, pupils say this is no longer the case. They say that teaching is now much better, staffing is more stable and, as a result, they are learning much more. Pupils are very keen to learn. They have high ambitions for their future careers.

Pupils are safe at the academy. This is because you and other senior leaders have ensured that safeguarding procedures are robust. A high volume of complaints about the academy have been submitted in recent months. Many of these focus on safeguarding and leadership issues. We discussed in detail how you deal with complaints. We also explored how effectively you seek and act upon advice from the local authority. It was clear that you and other leaders had responded effectively to concerns raised. Where appropriate, you have strengthened practice as a result of lessons learned.

Staff are well trained to spot the signs of abuse or neglect. At the start of term, staff learned about changes to statutory guidance. Staff receive weekly, detailed email updates from the DSL. Staff know when pupils need help and what to do about it.

Pupils say that they feel safe and that they know how to keep themselves safe, particularly online, for example to avoid radicalisation. The academy is working towards an e-safety quality mark.

Information about pupils' attendance and behaviour is analysed well to build a comprehensive picture around each pupil. From this, staff identify trends and needs. They provide preventative support for all pupils or individuals, when necessary. Leaders ensure that robust pre-employment checks on staff are completed. Leaders are trained in safer recruitment. Training records are thorough.

Staff work closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils are safe. A representative of the local safeguarding partnership meets with safeguarding staff regularly. They ensure that pupils know about risks such as child sexual exploitation (CSE) or drug activity. Local police officers talk to pupils in assembly to help them to understand how to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils recently learned how they might become involved in criminal activity by accident. They now know that, if this happens, police could still arrest them.

Staff ensure that pupils receive the right help at the right time. The school nursing service provides immediate support for pupils who need it. For example, they support pupils who are waiting for mental health service appointments. Staff provide one-to-one and small-group support when pupils need it.

The new chair of the local governing board understands safeguarding well, but is new to the role of school governance. He intends to ensure that governors focus on safeguarding more closely. Along with other recently appointed governors, he brings valuable experience in safeguarding children. It is too soon to see the impact of new governors' work.

While arrangements for safeguarding in the academy are effective, responsibility for safeguarding within the trust is not clear. Lines of accountability are blurred. There is confusion among governors about who has overall responsibility for safeguarding.

The CEO and trustees do not monitor the implementation and impact of policies robustly. As a result, trust leaders do not currently have sufficient oversight of this aspect of the academy's work. Academy leaders have ensured that safeguarding practice in the academy is strong. However, this is not, in the main, due to trust leadership. Trust leaders know that they need to strengthen quality assurance processes, including monitoring and oversight of safeguarding and governance. They have taken external advice and put in place an action plan to address this.

External support

Officers of Wolverhampton City Council safeguarding team provide effective support and challenge. They have reviewed safeguarding arrangements in the school. Leaders have acted on their advice.

Priorities for further improvement

- Trustees are ultimately accountable for safeguarding. However, trust leaders' oversight of safeguarding is currently weak. This means that, should issues arise with any aspects of safeguarding practice in the academy in the future, the trustees and the CEO would not necessarily be aware of this. Trustees and the CEO need to strengthen their monitoring procedures to ensure that the implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures in the academy continues to be robust.
- Lines of accountability are not clearly set out. As a result, trust leaders do not currently hold governors and academy leaders to account effectively for the impact of their work. The academy has a good working relationship with the trust. However, it is not always clear how the trust has contributed to the academy's successes. Trust leaders and the CEO need to ensure that lines of accountability are clear and that they are adding value to the work of academy leaders.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the Khalsa multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Wolverhampton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jane Spilsbury
Her Majesty's Inspector