

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



14 July 2021

David James
Principal
Caroline Chisholm School
Wooldale Centre for Learning
Wootton Fields
Northampton
Northamptonshire
NN4 6TP

Dear Mr James

No formal designation inspection of Caroline Chisholm School

Following my visit with Deirdre Duignan and Dave Gilkerson, Her Majesty's Inspectors, to your school on 29 June 2021, 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 no formal designation (NFD) inspections. 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.

We do not give graded judgements on NFD inspections. However, if we find some evidence that overall standards may be declining, but where no serious concerns have been identified, then the next inspection will normally be a section 5 inspection and will be brought forward. If we have serious concerns, we will deem the NFD inspection to be a section 5 inspection immediately.

Evidence

We met with leaders, including the designated safeguarding leader (DSL), to discuss safeguarding and child protection arrangements. I held a virtual meeting with five members of the board of trustees, including the chair. We met with groups of staff, including teaching and non-teaching staff. We met with groups of pupils from key stages 2, 3, 4 and 5. We scrutinised documents related to safeguarding, including

pupils' safeguarding records, policies, the single central record, behaviour and bullying logs and attendance information. We considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

Context

Caroline Chisholm School is larger than the average-sized school, catering for pupils aged 4 to 18. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is average. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is below average. A smaller-than-average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is average. The inspection took place during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. A very small number of pupils were isolating at the time of the inspection. A very small number of staff were shielding.

Main findings

Leaders give safeguarding arrangements high priority. The DSL is well trained and knowledgeable. She is supported by a well-trained specialist team. The DSL has ensured that staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities and provides regular training and updates. Policies relating to safeguarding are comprehensive and up to date. They adhere to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State. The policies are well implemented across the school.

Trustees maintain an appropriate oversight of safeguarding arrangements in the school. They ensure that they are kept up to date with safeguarding matters. They work closely with key staff to support and challenge them to be effective in their roles. Trustees are well trained and knowledgeable.

Systems for reporting concerns are efficient. Processes are in place to ensure that all concerns are picked up and followed through. Staff know to report all concerns, no matter how minor they may appear. This means that pupils who need help are identified and given the support they need.

Leaders take appropriate action in response to serious safeguarding concerns. They follow the guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2020 (updated 2021)*, considering the needs of all those involved. Leaders put in place risk assessments to support the most vulnerable pupils. These consider pupils' needs and wishes. Leaders check that the risk assessments are implemented and regularly review them to ensure that they continue to meet pupils' needs.

Pupils' behaviour is closely monitored. Leaders take reported incidents of sexual harassment seriously. They work with pupils to ensure that they understand the impact of their behaviour on others.

Staff know how to report concerns about an adult's conduct. Leaders take concerns seriously and take prompt action. They involve external agencies as appropriate.

Safeguarding records are of high quality. They contain the necessary detail to support any subsequent action that may be necessary. Records contribute to the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.

Leaders monitor pupils' attendance closely. They recognise the link between absences and potential safeguarding concerns. This includes for those pupils who attend alternative, off-site provision. However, they acknowledge that to strengthen these arrangements further, they need to ask for information about these pupils on a daily, rather than a weekly, basis. Leaders work closely with pupils who are persistently absent to support them in attending regularly.

Pupils generally feel safe in school. Pupils get on well together and report that incidents of bullying would be dealt with. Pupils in Year 7 feel that they have been well supported to settle into school during the COVID-19 pandemic. Pupils who spoke with us said that there is someone in school they could talk to if they had any problems or worries.

Leaders recognise that further work needs to be done to ensure that the school is fully inclusive. They have recently made links with external groups to support anti-bullying work and the promotion of diversity. Some pupils continue to experience homophobic attitudes and behaviour from others. Pupils report that there is some sexist name-calling in school. Many teachers challenge this. However, there are some who do not. Leaders are aware of the need for further staff training and are determined to work with staff and pupils to eradicate homophobic and sexist attitudes.

Prior to the pandemic, leaders had amended the approach to delivering the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum so that pupils received discrete, timetabled lessons delivered by specialist staff. Pupils' views on the quality of the PSHE curriculum are mixed. For example, Year 6 pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and can remember important knowledge. However, older pupils have experienced inconsistent provision. They do not feel that they have the important knowledge they need, for example, about keeping themselves safe, about respect and about consent. Because of the pandemic, leaders have amended the school's PSHE provision. These changes mean that Year 12 students do not currently receive PSHE education. Plans are in place to ensure that all pupils receive the full PSHE curriculum from September 2021.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that all staff have the knowledge, skills and understanding to consistently challenge homophobic and sexist language effectively.
- Ensure that all pupils, particularly those in key stages 4 and 5, receive an effective, comprehensive PSHE curriculum.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for West Northamptonshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Deborah Mosley
Her Majesty's Inspector