

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



12 July 2021

Jo Trevenna
Northampton International Academy
Barrack Road
Northampton
Northamptonshire
NN1 1AA

Dear Dr Trevenna

No formal designation inspection of Northampton International Academy

Following my visit with Chris Stevens and Dave Gilkerson, Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), to your school on 9 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 and was concerned about behaviour and attitudes of pupils 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 scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. We met with the headteacher and other senior leaders, and one of us met with officers from the East Midlands Academy Trust (EMAT).

We spoke with many members of staff and groups of pupils from both primary and secondary phases. We spoke with pupils and staff informally around the school. We

observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and during social times. One of us spoke with parents at the end of the school day.

We reviewed a wide range of documents, including a local authority audit report of the school's safeguarding arrangements. We scrutinised school policies, risk assessments, and attendance and behaviour records.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and managers have not taken effective action to maintain the high standards of behaviour and attitudes identified at the school's previous inspection.

Context

Since the previous inspection, leaders have restructured the roles of staff with pastoral and safeguarding responsibilities. They have also increased the number of staff with responsibility for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They have introduced a house structure and are developing 'Prospects NIA' as an in-house alternative provision.

The number of pupils on roll has increased since the previous inspection. There are 1,870 pupils currently on roll. Almost half of all pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals is higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils with SEND is lower than the national average. At the time of the inspection pupils in the Year 9 'bubble' were asked to leave the school to isolate due to COVID-19 (coronavirus). Year 11 pupils were also not in school.

Main Findings

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have improved safeguarding arrangements since the previous inspection. Leaders and trustees ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders have restructured staffing to increase the capacity for safeguarding. Designated safeguarding leaders work as a team with pastoral, attendance and SEND leaders and colleagues.

Leaders are trained in safer recruitment. They are thorough in checking the suitability of all adults who work with pupils. Procedures for checking the suitability of staff meet the statutory requirements. Leaders have monitoring processes in place to check on the rigour of pre-employment checks.

Designated safeguarding leaders receive regular training. Leaders with safeguarding responsibilities know pupils well. They work well with parents and carers. They respond quickly to concerns. They work effectively with a range of external agencies to ensure that pupils receive appropriate support. They readily challenge other agencies to provide pupils with the right care and support when needed. Safeguarding records are thorough.

Staff receive training related to their safeguarding responsibilities. They receive regular updates and know how to report their concerns to designated safeguarding leaders. Staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Pupils are taught how to be safe in different situations. Leaders adapt the personal, social, health and economic curriculum to support pupils' learning as local risks change. For example, pupils have received additional learning about online safety and cyber bullying. Most parents who expressed their views through the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, shared views that their children are happy and safe at school.

Trustees have reviewed their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. They have supported school leaders to improve safeguarding arrangements. They have processes in place to check on safeguarding arrangements. Trust officers are currently embedding these monitoring processes.

Leaders have not maintained the high standards of behaviour and attitudes identified at the school's previous section 5 inspection. Expectations of pupils' behaviour are not consistently high. Staff in the secondary phase do not consistently implement the school's policy for managing behaviour. We observed instances of pupils disrupting the learning of others in some lessons. Some pupils say that this is frustrating their learning. The behaviour of pupils in the primary classes and sixth form was seen to be calm and respectful. Staff and pupils agreed that this was typical. Not all pupils in the secondary phase arrive punctually to lessons.

Pupils' behaviour at break and lunchtime was seen during the inspection to be sociable, calm and orderly. Not all pupils were present for the inspection, however. Moreover, some pupils told us that this is not always the case. Most staff believe that leaders are now taking effective action to improve pupils' behaviour, and pupils broadly, but not consistently, support this view. Further improvement is needed so that all pupils and all staff have full confidence that leaders are tackling and improving pupils' behaviour.

Pupils say that there are some instances of bullying. Records show that these instances are dealt with effectively. However, pupils commented that some staff do not deal with bullying swiftly enough, and that they sometimes have to raise their concerns a second time in order for them to be taken seriously.

Leaders have established 'NIA Prospects' as an in-house alternative provision. Their plans to develop this sooner have been affected by the pandemic. This relatively new provision is having a positive impact on pupils' behaviour. The number of repeated, fixed-term and permanent exclusions is reducing. Individual pupils are being supported in their learning and managing their behaviour through this provision. These pupils were able to tell us about how staff understand their needs and have helped them to improve their behaviour. However, sometimes the expectations of pupils in the provision are low. For example, pupils do not always arrive punctually, and their lateness is not always challenged.

Staff and pupils value the newly formed house system. They speak positively about the sense of identity and belonging this is creating. Staff speak positively about the equality and diversity group that has been established to promote understanding, tolerance and respect. However, it is too soon to determine whether these new initiatives are having an effect on pupils' attitudes and behaviour.

The attendance of some pupils has been affected by COVID-19. However, there are too many pupils who do not attend school regularly enough. Leaders are working with parents and their children to improve attendance. Leaders' actions are beginning to show signs of improvement.

External support

Leaders have gained from the support provided by external consultants and local authority safeguarding officers. The impact of this external support has resulted in improvements to the school's safeguarding arrangements.

Priorities for further improvement

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes by ensuring that:
 - leaders consistently support all staff to have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and conduct
 - leaders consistently support staff to implement the school's behaviour policy to eradicate instances of low-level disruption, especially in the secondary-aged classes
 - leaders deal with all incidents of bullying promptly
 - pupils in the secondary phase arrive punctually to lessons
 - leaders continue to support and challenge parents whose children do not attend school regularly.

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

Chris Davies
Her Majesty's Inspector