

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



10 November 2021

Jo Donnellan
Principal
Seva School
Link House
Eden Road
Walsgrave Triangle
Coventry
CV2 2TB

Dear Ms Donnellan

No formal designation inspection of Seva School

Following my visit with Eve Morris, Her Majesty's Inspector to your school on 13 and 14 October 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and the time you took to discuss your school.

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 about the effectiveness of leadership and management in the school (including governance).

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 as a section 5 inspection immediately.

Evidence

During the inspection, we scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. We held meetings with the principal and senior leaders. We spoke with a significant number of staff and the chair

of the trustees and two other members of the trust board. We met formally with a group of Year 11 pupils and we spoke informally to pupils at lunchtime and breaktime.

Inspectors visited classrooms and talked to pupils informally while they were working. We examined school policies and information on the school's website. We scrutinised minutes of trustee meetings. Inspectors considered 48 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. We reviewed complaints received by Ofsted.

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

Safeguarding is effective

Context

There are 574 pupils on roll. A low proportion of pupils are entitled to free school meals and an average proportion are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. The majority of pupils speak English as an additional language. The mobility of pupils is well above average. Approximately 25% of staff joined the school in September 2021.

Main Findings

You and your leadership team ensure that safeguarding is at the heart of your work. Staff receive the appropriate training in a wide range of safeguarding topics. This means they have a good knowledge of the signs of abuse. They are vigilant to the signs that a pupil may need help. Staff pass any concerns, no matter how small, to the school's safeguarding team. This team investigates concerns appropriately and refers to other agencies as necessary. Wider aspects of safeguarding practice, including internet safety and the administration of medicines, are strong.

The recruitment of staff follows appropriate safer recruitment practices. Several leaders and trustees have completed safer recruitment training. Leaders ensure that the correct pre-employment checks are made before staff join the school. They maintain an accurate record of these checks.

Leaders are acutely aware of the potential risks facing pupils. They make pupils aware of these risks and provide them with the information they need to help them keep safe. Pupils learn, for instance, about the dangers of county lines and gang activity. Pupils say that they feel safe at school. They told us that they have adults in school that they trust and can speak to if they have any concerns. Pupils say that adults are good at sorting out any problems they have quickly.

The school environment is calm and orderly. All staff we spoke to said that they enjoy their work with pupils. Pupils like coming to school. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Many pupils told inspectors that the school is improving because there are fewer changes to who teaches them than in the past. Some older pupils do

not always feel that they have the opportunity to voice their opinion about the school. They would like more chances to share their views.

Since taking up post in September 2020, you have worked hard to improve various aspects of the school. You have raised expectations of staff and hold them rigorously to account for this. You and other leaders have successfully taken most staff with them on this improvement journey. Most staff enjoy working at the school and feel valued. However, this is not the case for all staff. The morale of some teachers, particularly in the secondary phase of the school, is low. These teachers do not feel that they are treated fairly. In addition, a few staff told us that they did not feel comfortable sharing their concerns with school leaders because they felt it may have a negative impact on their working life.

The school has policies and procedures in place for when staff want to raise formal concerns. This includes appropriate policies such as a whistleblowing policy. You and trustees have also given staff the opportunity to meet with you and share their views. For example, every member of staff was invited to meet with trustees in the summer term. However, leaders, including trustees, have not done enough to systematically gather the views of staff. This means that, while leaders know some of the reasons for some low staff morale, they do not have a full picture. In addition, this means leaders have not acted promptly enough to address some staff's worries. While this has not started to have a negative impact on pupils' experiences, it has the potential to do so if it is not addressed. A few staff we spoke to believed that trustees do not always take formal concerns they have raised with them seriously or dealt with them appropriately. Inspection evidence does not support this.

Trustees have the necessary skills to fulfil their roles. They understand their roles well. For example, they keep a close eye on the school's financial resources. In addition, they receive regular information about safeguarding. The school's safeguarding trustee receives helpful information about safeguarding matters. This includes information on staff training and an analysis of safeguarding incidents. Trustees use this information well to check that the school is meeting statutory safeguarding duties. For example, they have ensured that the safeguarding policy takes into account the most recent guidance issued by the Department for Education.

Trustees know the views of parents. They have strong links with the local community. This means trustees are alert to any questions or concerns parents have. They use the information from parents to appropriately challenge you about some aspects of the school's work. In addition, trustees hold you to account for the academic performance of pupils.

Additional support

The school does not receive any external support.

Priorities for further improvement

- The morale of some staff is low. Leaders, including trustees, should take further action to gather a comprehensive view of what is causing some staff to feel unhappy about working at the school. They should address and monitor these issues systematically. This should reduce the risk of staff morale having a negative impact on pupils.

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 Coventry. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Stevens
Her Majesty's Inspector