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Simon Cox  
Executive Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Cox

### **No formal designation inspection of DSL V E-ACT Academy**

Following my visit with Caroline Poole, Seconded Inspector, Ellenor Beighton and Elizabeth Moore, Ofsted Inspectors, to your school on 1 December 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 aspects of the personal development of pupils at the school.

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**

We scrutinised the single central register and other documents relating to safeguarding and child-protection arrangements. We met with the executive headteacher, senior leaders, groups of pupils, staff, and safeguarding leaders. We met with officers from the E-ACT multi-academy trust. I spoke with the chair of trustees on the telephone. We

reviewed curriculum planning for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, reviewed pupils' work and visited lessons and an assembly. We scrutinised various policies relating to behaviour, bullying and exclusions, and relationships and sex education. We reviewed examples of risk assessments. We considered 21 parent and carer responses to the Parent View survey.

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

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

### **Context**

Since the previous inspection, a new executive headteacher has been appointed. There have been changes to other leadership posts. The head of the secondary phase took up her position in January 2021.

There are 913 pupils, on the school's roll. The school is an all-through school, for pupils aged three to 18 years. The school works in partnership with the Parker E-ACT Academy to provide a shared sixth form. Most pupils are white British. The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is slightly higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational need and/or disabilities is above the national average, with fewer pupils having an education, health, and care plan than the national average.

### **Main Findings**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders, trustees, and trust officers make sure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The school's safeguarding policy reflects the latest Department for Education guidance. The policy is consistently well implemented. Leaders maintain safeguarding as a key priority for the school.

Leaders check the suitability of adults before they start working with pupils. These processes meet statutory requirements. School leaders and trust officers regularly monitor the pre-employment checks and the single central register.

Safeguarding leaders benefit from regular training. They fulfil their responsibilities well. They take swift and effective action when concerns about a pupil's welfare are identified. They work with external agencies, such as the police and social care, when additional support is needed. Leaders maintain thorough safeguarding records. They identify trends and local safeguarding issues. They make changes to assemblies and the focus of the PSHE programme to inform pupils of potential risks and how to keep safe. Leaders write risk assessments as part of the school's safeguarding procedures. However, some risk assessments are not reviewed regularly enough.

Staff receive weekly safeguarding updates that build on termly safeguarding training. They know pupils and their welfare needs well. They identify concerns and fulfil their

safeguarding responsibilities. Leaders regularly check that staff know and follow the school's safeguarding procedures.

Leaders have made sure that there are clear and effective systems in place when a pupil arrives late to school or when they need to leave before the end of the school day. Staff at both the primary and secondary reception offices understand their safeguarding responsibilities. They follow the school's systems to ensure that pupils are safe.

Pupils say that they feel safe at school. They know who to turn to if they have any concerns or worries. Pupils learn about risk awareness and personal safety through PSHE education. Older pupils say that they learn about knife crime, online safety and how to manage privacy settings on electronic devices. Younger pupils learn about the possible impact of misusing technology.

Most parents shared the view that their children are happy and safe at school.

The school's personal development programme aims to help pupils become self-confident and resilient. Pupils benefit from a range of opportunities and experiences. The school's 'retreat' base provides emotional and well-being support for those who need it.

The PSHE curriculum is well structured. Pupils have the opportunity to build their knowledge and deepen their understanding by revisiting and building on previous learning. Pupils learn about physical and mental health in age-appropriate ways. Carefully structured learning about healthy relationships is included as part of relationships, sex and health education. Pupils have the opportunity to reflect on their values and responsibilities as part of their learning. Pupils learn in age-appropriate ways about unhealthy relationships and how to keep themselves safe. This learning includes understanding consent, peer pressure, inappropriate images, and the misuse of mobile technology.

Pupils behave well. Lessons are mostly calm and orderly. Older pupils believe that behaviour has improved and that there has been a reduction in bullying since they joined the school. Pupils say that teachers deal with bullying quickly and effectively. Staff are not complacent. They are vigilant and look for signs of bullying. Leaders provide pupils with a range of ways to report bullying when it occurs.

### **Additional support**

Trustees know the school well, including its strengths and priorities for development. Trust officers visit the school often. They check on the school's provision, including safeguarding arrangements and the PSHE curriculum. They support staff with effective training.

## **Priorities for further improvement**

- Leaders need to ensure that risk assessments identify all the potential risks and that control measures are put in place to mitigate those risks. They need to make sure that risk assessments are reviewed and updated regularly to ensure they include the most up-to-date information.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the E-ACT multi-academy trust, 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**