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5 July 2022

David Bennett
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Dear Mr Bennett

No formal designation inspection of Kingstone High School

Following my visit with Emma Gater, Her Majesty's Inspector to your school on 5 July 2022, 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.

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 record and other documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour and child protection arrangements. We met with the executive headteacher, head of school, and the chair of trustees. In addition, we held formal meetings with 16 teachers selected at random and met with pupils from different year groups. I spoke on the telephone with local authority safeguarding officers. Both of us observed pupils' behaviour around the school and checked the way staff and leaders had responded to particular incidents. During the inspection, we had informal conversations with some staff

and pupils to gather additional information about how the school manages behaviour and safeguarding matters. We looked at the results of the school's own surveys and staff and pupils' views.

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

Safeguarding is effective

Context

There are 603 pupils on roll. Most are White British. Approximately a quarter of pupils are eligible for free school meals. About a fifth of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, of which a minority have an education, health and care plan.

The school received a section 8 inspection in December 2018, which found safeguarding to be effective and that the school continued to be good. Prior to this, a section 5 inspection in April 2015 judged the school's overall effectiveness to be good.

Main Findings

This inspection was carried out in response to information sent to Ofsted that raised concerns about the school's safeguarding arrangements. Inspectors found the school's safeguarding processes to be fit for purpose.

Leaders have established clear, efficient and effective systems for reporting and recording any safeguarding concerns and incidents. They make sure staff know what to look out for and provide regular reminders and training to check they have remembered what to do. During the inspection, inspectors spoke with about a third of all staff who were in school. All of them could explain the school's systems for reporting concerns. They understand how different concerns should be categorised. Inspectors' checks on the school's safeguarding records found that staff use the systems correctly. Furthermore, leaders routinely check on records to spot any patterns, and to review the actions taken.

If leaders find that any staff have not responded to a concern or incident in the right way, they take appropriate steps to stop this happening in the future.

When leaders have had cause to suspend or exclude a pupil, they have followed proper processes.

Trustees know about their safeguarding responsibilities and make sure the school complies with statutory duties. They have attended training and ensure safer recruitment practices are followed. The chair of trustees has recently worked with the local authority in connection with safeguarding matters. This has refreshed trustees' understanding of exactly what to do in different circumstances.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. If they have any worries or problems, there is always someone available to talk to them. The school's 'hub' provides a safe, calm space where pupils can go for advice or support. Pupils value this and can give several examples of how staff have helped them or their friends at different times. In personal, social, health and economic education lessons, pupils learn about safe behaviours and how to look after themselves and others. The school's relationships and sex education programme sets out what pupils should be taught and when. Leaders have consulted parents about this.

Most of the time, the school is a calm and orderly place in which to work and learn. Pupils dress smartly in school uniform and enjoy being in school. The school's rules are fair and promote equality and respect for others. Pupils are not troubled by bullying. However, there is room for improvement in some aspects of their behaviour and the way in which staff and leaders manage it. For example, in recent times there has been an increase in older pupils vaping. Sometimes, pupils bring vaping equipment into school. Some try to vape on the school site. Staff challenge this when they spot it, but pupils say that some goes unnoticed. In addition, a proportion of pupils use offensive language. Staff and leaders routinely challenge this, and record and report it. However, staff are not consistent in the way that they talk to pupils about it. Consequently, pupils receive some mixed messages about the relative seriousness of different types of offensive language.

Leaders have carried out surveys of pupils' and staff views about school life. Pupils responses are mostly positive and reflect the attitudes and views that they shared with inspectors. Staff views are more mixed. The majority of responses are positive, but a proportion report a decline in their feelings of well-being. The disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic are a factor in this. However, it is also clear that some staff think more could be done to improve the consistency of behaviour management in school.

Leaders carry out all the required checks on adults in school. These are recorded correctly. Confidential information is held securely.

Additional support

The local authority reports a close working relationship with the school in regard to safeguarding matters. Local authority safeguarding staff have carried out routine safeguarding checks on the school. When necessary, local authority safeguarding officers look into matters that come to their attention. School leaders cooperate fully with this.

Priorities for further improvement

- Staff routinely challenge offensive language and pupils know it is wrong. However, staff are not consistent in what they tell pupils about why it is wrong. Leaders should make sure all staff understand how to respond constructively to the things that pupils

sometimes say. They should also make sure that staff have sufficient guidance and support to help them do this.

- There has been a recent increase in older pupils vaping. Sometimes this happens on the school site and goes unnoticed. Leaders and staff should increase their vigilance and ensure that everyone understands that this is unacceptable in school.
- Trustees know the correct safeguarding procedures to follow but have, in the past, misinterpreted an aspect of policy. This has not put anyone at risk of harm. Going forwards, if trustees have cause to be involved in safeguarding matters, they should always take advice from local authority safeguarding staff.

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

Yours sincerely

Martin Pye
Her Majesty's Inspector