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Ann Donaghy
Acting Executive Headteacher
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Dear Ann Donaghy

Urgent inspection of Da Vinci Academy

Following my visit with Anne Maingay, His Majesty's Inspector (HMI), Chris Davies, HMI, and Richard Vasey, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 13 July 2023, I write on behalf of His 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 urgent inspections. The inspection was carried out because His 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 urgent 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 graded inspection, which will be carried out under section 5 of the Act and be brought forward. If we have serious concerns, we will deem the urgent inspection as a graded inspection immediately.

Evidence

We scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. We met with the acting executive headteacher and groups of pupils from four different year groups, as well as speaking with pupils informally during

social times. We met with four groups of staff, including teaching and support staff. We also met with the chair of the governing body, and trustees.

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

Safeguarding is effective

Main Findings

Context

Since the previous inspection, there has been a change in leadership. You were appointed as acting executive headteacher in March 2023. Additionally, two deputy headteachers left in 2023 and have since been replaced, with the subsequent appointment of two new deputy headteachers.

Main Findings

School leaders give safeguarding arrangements a high priority. Safeguarding leaders are well trained and knowledgeable. Leaders have ensured that pupils feel safe at the school. They have provided high-quality safeguarding training and updates for all staff.

All staff completed safeguarding training at the start of the academic year. Leaders give weekly safeguarding updates to staff to revisit key messages from this training, and they regularly check staff's knowledge and awareness of current contextual concerns. This has allowed them to identify areas where more training and support are needed, such as regarding Early Help identification. Leaders have reminded staff about the importance of reporting any low-level concerns they may have and about the role of the local authority. Leaders provide support and further training where it is needed. Staff know how to raise concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a pupil. Leaders have recently introduced a new reporting system, which enables staff to record low-level concerns. This system is also a strategic tool, which gives oversight of low-level concerns and agreed actions to trustees.

The school has a strong safeguarding culture. 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 are tenacious with contacting external agencies and putting in place appropriate support for pupils.

Leaders create a safe environment for pupils. The procedures to recruit new staff members are followed closely. Leaders ensure that all necessary checks are completed

prior to an adult starting to work at the school. Records of these checks are comprehensive and up to date.

Leaders have designed an ambitious and effective curriculum for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. Pupils take their PSHE learning seriously and develop secure knowledge and understanding. Pupils spoke positively about the school's 'inspiration days' and 'life lessons', which focus on topics like British values and online safety and provide a breadth of experiences, including visits from external speakers.

Pupils comment that most pupils in school treat each other with respect. They say that a small number of pupils use discriminatory language. Pupils have confidence that, when staff know about such incidents, most will deal with them appropriately.

Pupils say they feel happy and safe. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. Leaders know about the risks that pupils might face in the local area, and they ensure that pupils learn how to manage these risks, should they face them. Pupils told inspectors about what they have learned regarding drug and alcohol use and misuse, staying safe online, and about what makes a healthy relationship. The curriculum covering relationships, sex education and health education is a strength of the school. These sessions are revisited and age-appropriate. Pupils value their learning about physical and mental health. However, pupils' understanding and recall of learning related to extremism is less secure. Leaders are aware of this and are planning to allocate more time for key stage 3 pupils next year. This will provide opportunities to embed this learning securely for pupils in these topic areas.

Pupils know who they can go to if they have a problem or are any worries. They know the safeguarding team in school. Pupils understand what constitutes bullying. Most say it happens rarely, and that staff deal with it when it does.

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.

Additional support

The school is part of the L.E.A.D Academy Trust, which provides effective support for school's leaders.

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

Yours sincerely

Dawn Ashbolt
His Majesty's Inspector