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10 June 2010

Mr J Porteous
Headteacher
Turton High School Media Arts College
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Dear Mr Porteous

Ofsted 2010-11 best practice survey: safeguarding in schools

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation during my visit on 25 May 2010 to look at work in safeguarding.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our publication about best practice in safeguarding in schools. The publication will include case studies about individual schools. If Turton High School Media Arts College is included as a case study, you will have an opportunity to comment before publication. Individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

Features of good practice

- Turton High School Media Arts College is a caring, sharing and reflective school where people are listened to, feel valued, have a voice and influence decisions.
- 'Well-being is a fundamental building block for achievement'. Students' voice is central to all the school's work and rights, responsibilities and respect are key values underpinning everyday life for all. Conversations with students, staff, governors and parents confirmed that the school has achieved considerable success in this respect.
- The introduction of SEAL and work on achieving the Rights Respecting Schools Award, have been integral to the school's journey. Their aims and underlying principles echo the school's belief in the importance of enabling students to develop healthy minds and emotional resilience. The school is helping students to develop a greater understanding and tolerance of individual differences. However, it recognises that more could be done to inform them about the effects of particular conditions, such as autism, on people's lives. The school does not stand still, as seen in the recent appointment of a full-time mental health specialist to work across the

cluster. This is an exciting development and one which will enable the school to continue with this aspect of its work.

- The school has established the student support centre, which is available to all students and plays a valuable and positive role in providing them with support and guidance and promoting their emotional well-being.
- Students have a meaningful role in decision-making. For example, they are involved in some staff appointments and are pleased that their views are taken seriously. The students represent their school and their peers in a mature manner, which models the principles of mutual trust and respect.
- This is an inclusive school with a 'can do' approach. All students, regardless of their particular needs or disabilities, are encouraged to take part fully in all aspects of school life. Risk assessments are detailed at all levels, including for activities on and off site and for individual students where necessary. Some students are involved in drawing up these risk assessments but the school recognises that more could take an active part in this aspect of safeguarding.
- Considerable work has been undertaken over recent years to improve the premises so that they are more accessible to all students, including wheelchair users. This attention to their physical safety and well-being is valued by students and their parents. The school recognises that increasing the number of main doors which open automatically could give students with physical disabilities greater independence and freedom of movement around the site.
- Safeguarding policies, procedures and guidance for staff are very good. They are written clearly and include up-to-date details of statutory requirements and the roles and responsibilities assigned to people throughout the school.
- There are exceptionally rigorous arrangements for vetting staff, governors, volunteers, contractors and visitors to the school. The single central record is an excellent example of how to conduct checks, verify evidence, and follow up information when necessary.
- The school's very good practice is recognised and sought by others locally and nationally. As a training school, it is called upon to provide training and guidance and lead on different aspects of its work, including safeguarding.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop safeguarding in the school.

As explained previously, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on the Ofsted website under the URN for your school. It will also be available to the team for your next inspection.

Yours sincerely

Caroline Broomhead
Her Majesty's Inspector