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2 February 2018

Mrs Carol McDermott
Headteacher
Wycliffe CofE Primary School
Saltaire Road
Shipley
West Yorkshire
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Dear Mrs McDermott

No formal designation inspection of Wycliffe CofE Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 18 January 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements at the school.

Evidence

I scrutinised the single central record and many other documents relating to safeguarding, child protection arrangements and behaviour records. You and I had discussions throughout the day and I met other leaders, various members of staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. A number of parents shared their views with me at the beginning of the school day. I observed pupils in classrooms and in other parts of the school building and listened to what some of them had to say about what it is like to be a pupil at the school. I also scrutinised documentation such as attendance records and analysis, external reviews and minutes from governing body meetings.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

Context

The school has 318 pupils and is larger than the average primary school. A larger than average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and an average proportion speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is average. A very small number of these pupils have an education, health and care plan. The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is just below the national average.

The school was placed in serious weaknesses following the inspection that took place in July 2017. Safeguarding was judged to be ineffective. Following this, the substantive headteacher left the school and you have been appointed as interim headteacher from September 2017. An interim leader for the early years and an acting assistant headteacher are also new to their posts. A school business manager has been appointed and you now have a facilities management company providing premises services, including health and safety. An academy order is currently in place and the school is preparing to be a sponsored academy as soon as possible.

Findings

You have begun your role as interim headteacher with the determination needed to ensure that there are effective safeguarding arrangements in place to protect pupils. Staff have received additional training and many new policies and procedures have been introduced. Consequently, staff, pupils and parents feel there is a much stronger regard to safeguarding than at the time of the last inspection. As a result of the clarity you have provided in the new procedures, staff are beginning to apply these with greater consistency. However, you are rightly aware that as some of these systems are so new, it is vital that leaders keep checking the effectiveness of their implementation until they become securely embedded.

On your arrival, you took swift action to address the safe movement of pupils in and around the school. A staggered entry to the school building with staff supervision is resulting in a much safer and calmer start to the school day. Gates are quickly locked when school begins and any latecomers access the school via the main entrance. With the support of the newly appointed facilities management company, you have also been able to install additional safety features such as fencing in the playground, high handles on doors and secure access from the office to the rest of the building. These measures have vastly improved pupils' safety.

All of the groups of pupils I talked to said that they loved Wycliffe Primary School and that the adults made them feel safe and well cared for. They also recognised the improvements leaders have made to help them move safely around the building. Pupils are particularly proud of their school and are keen to follow the newly introduced expectations which guide them in how to behave responsibly and underpin all of the new routines. Pupils were seen following the 'calm corridors' signs which reminded them to walk calmly through the school building; something

they demonstrated even when not directly supervised by adults. You have ensured that pupils have a voice and carry out responsibilities which support the smooth running of the school. Pupils rise to the challenge and enjoy contributing and making a difference to the whole-school community. For example, the school council's recent winter ball was held so that pupils could raise funds for some keenly awaited playground equipment.

While behaviour in classes and around the building is very positive, you acknowledge that during outdoor play there are more incidents of misbehaviour, some of which result in accidents. However, as yet, leaders are not analysing the behaviour incidents or accidents which occur. This is an important next step so that you are able to spot patterns and take action to minimise any identified risks. Reporting this analysis routinely and in a consistent format to the interim executive board would also enable them to check the effectiveness of the new routines and to hold school leaders even more rigorously to account. On the day of the inspection, pupils were inside due to the weather so it was not possible to observe outdoor play at breaktimes. However, one of the next steps you have identified is to introduce new equipment and a range of zones to support more purposeful play. Lunchtime staff have also had training to help them engage pupils in a range of activities.

Through support from other schools, the deputy headteacher has implemented much stronger systems for monitoring the arrangements for keeping pupils safe and protecting them from harm. These systems are already showing that leaders are acting as swiftly as possible to respond to pupils' needs and access appropriate external support when necessary. The deputy headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding leader, has made sure that records are clear, up to date and with a chronology to show the timeliness of actions taken. The induction provided for new staff, along with ongoing training for existing staff, means that adults in school are much more confident in recognising and reporting any signs of concern.

Systems introduced by the pastoral administrator are proving effective in reducing the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent. The school's figures show that persistent absence in 2016/17 reduced to 7%. Attendance also improved but still remains just below the national average. However, leaders do not routinely track the attendance of pupil groups and report this to the interim executive board. This means it is difficult for leaders to check whether attendance is weaker for any particular pupil group and, therefore, take the necessary actions to make improvements.

A new early years leader is in post and has made sure that the early years welfare requirements are being met. She has raised the awareness of staff about the aspects of safety relevant to their roles. Consequently, staff are now more rigorous in helping children to understand how to use resources and equipment safely.

The strong and challenging start which the interim executive board had made at the time of the last inspection has been continued. Members thoroughly check the accuracy of information from leaders, for example through their regular visits to school linked with their specific lead role. Regular visits by the safeguarding lead have resulted in recommendations being made and followed through by school leaders. This approach is raising the expectations of staff about the importance of safeguarding procedures and is making sure that school leaders are held to account for the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements. Close working between the local authority and the interim executive board has resulted in a thorough understanding of the strengths and remaining weaknesses in terms of safeguarding practice. An updated action plan is being used to capture the improvements made so far but also to set out the next steps for improvement. Members are realistic about the time it will take to fully embed a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school but they are highly committed to ensuring that it becomes a reality.

External support

The local authority has provided considerable support for the school. A wide range of external safeguarding support such as specialist consultants, school-to-school support and facilities management has been arranged through the local authority. For example, the school business manager has been supported by a local school to further develop risk assessments and processes for external visits beyond the school site. The school is now linking with the Local Safeguarding Hub to access further specific support moving forward. The school's improvement adviser has an accurate view of the effectiveness of actions taken to strengthen safeguarding procedures at Wycliffe. She is now working closely with school leaders and the interim executive board to develop practice further and support the transition to becoming an academy.

Priorities for further improvement

- For leaders and the interim executive board to make sure that the new safeguarding systems and procedures become embedded as quickly as possible.
- For leaders to more rigorously analyse behaviour incidents and accidents and report these to the interim executive board in a consistent format.
- The attendance and persistent absence of relevant pupil groups is routinely analysed and reported to the interim executive board.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the interim executive board, the director of education for the Diocese of Leeds, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bradford. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kirsty Godfrey
Her Majesty's Inspector