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Nick Lambert
Headteacher
Chilwell Croft Academy
Chilwell Croft
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Dear Mr Lambert

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Chilwell Croft Academy

Following my visit with Rachel Howie, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your academy on 30 April – 1 May 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because the Chief Inspector was concerned about the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and leadership and management at the academy.

Evidence

Her Majesty's Inspectors scrutinised the single central record, policies relating to safeguarding, documentation relating to the academy's child protection arrangements, records of behaviour incidents, pupils' attendance records, and minutes of the Trust Board and Local Advisory group meetings. Her Majesty's Inspectors met with the headteacher, the executive headteacher, other leaders, teachers, support staff, learning mentors, members of the Trust Board and Local Advisory Group, and groups of pupils. Her Majesty's Inspectors also spoke informally with pupils and parents and carers.

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

The academy's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

The quality of leadership and management requires improvement.

Context

The school became an academy in September 2012 following the closure of its predecessor school, Chilwell Croft Primary School. It is sponsored by Aston Manor Academy. An executive headteacher oversees the work of both academies. When Chilwell Croft Academy opened, it maintained its own governing body and decision making powers. Members of the Multi Academy Trust Board met regularly with the headteacher and governing body representatives. In December 2013 both governing bodies were replaced with a single Trust Board to govern both academies. At the same time, each academy established a Local Advisory Group made up of parents, staff and members of the community. This group does not have any decision making powers.

The previous headteacher of the academy left in October 2013. An interim headteacher joined in January 2014. He has subsequently been appointed as the permanent headteacher. Since the academy opened, there have been a number of changes in staffing. In September 2013, seven class teachers joined the academy. Six of these are newly qualified teachers.

Chilwell Croft Academy is a larger than average-sized primary school. The pupils come from a range of cultural heritages. The largest groups are of African, Caribbean, White British, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and White and Black Caribbean heritage. Almost half of the pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above the national average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above the national average. More pupils than average leave or join the school other than at the usual time.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Academy leaders and staff place a strong emphasis on encouraging all pupils to get along together. As a consequence, the school is a harmonious community where pupils from different ethnic heritages work together well and feel safe.

Pupils and parents who spoke to Her Majesty's Inspectors agree that the new system of rewards and consequences is contributing to improvements in pupils'

behaviour. In most classes, pupils have positive attitudes to learning in lessons and are keen to talk about their work. Nevertheless, pupils told Her Majesty's Inspectors that although behaviour in lessons is improving it could be even better. They explained that a few pupils do not listen when the teacher is talking and that some pupils do not behave as well for temporary teachers as they do for their usual teachers.

When walking around school pupils often show their good manners. For example they hold doors open for each other and for adults without being reminded. The combined work of the lunchtime supervisors, the learning mentors and the pupil beat bullying mentors is contributing to better behaviour in the playground. Nevertheless, pupils also report, and academy leaders agree, that some pupils are not yet behaving as well they should in the playground. School records show that the behaviour of a few pupils during break times is boisterous and that there are occasional incidents of name-calling.

Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including homophobic name-calling. They told Her Majesty's Inspectors that incidents of bullying and name-calling have reduced and racist incidents are rare. Inspectors checked academy records and these confirmed this is the case. Pupils say that they feel valued and respected because academy staff listen to and act upon any concerns they may have.

Leaders are able to show that behaviour is improving over time because they keep detailed record of incidents of behaviour. However, they do not always record the actions they have taken in response to individual incidents. Neither do they have the systems in place to be able to easily check for patterns in behaviour across the academy.

Attendance has improved and is similar to the national average for primary schools.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The newly appointed headteacher and the executive headteacher have high expectations for the academy and its community. They work together well and they are currently demonstrating that they have the skills required to improve the academy. The headteacher has accurately identified the academy's strengths and priorities for improvement. Together with the executive headteacher, he has strengthened systems for keeping pupils safe and introduced appropriate systems for encouraging pupils to behave well and attend regularly.

The academy's procedures for keeping pupils safe meet statutory requirements. Staff know how to recognise signs of child abuse and who to report their concerns to. Pupils learn how to stay safe in a variety of situations, including when using medicines, mobile phones and electronic tablets. Although academy leaders are

aware of the government's guidance on preventing radicalisation and extremist behaviour, staff have yet to receive training on this issue.

Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have a clear understanding about different types of families and relationships. However, this is not the case across the rest of the academy. The academy is reviewing the way it teaches pupils about sex and relationships. Academy leaders plan to consult with parents and carers as part of the review. Teachers are increasingly providing pupils with activities that are encouraging them to be thoughtful and responsible individuals. For instance, Year 3 pupils use stories to explore issues such as fairness and prejudice. Pupils have a secure understanding of different faiths. In academy assemblies and religious education lessons they learn about different religions.

When the academy opened in September 2012, members of the Multi Academy Trust became concerned at Chilwell Croft's governing body's ability to hold senior leaders to account. In response to these concerns, the governing body was replaced with a single Trust Board to work across both academies. The members of the Trust Board were carefully selected to ensure all members had a broad range of relevant skills and experience.

The newly formed Trust Board met for the first time last term. It is too soon to fully evaluate the effectiveness of the challenge and support provided by this new Trust Board. The headteacher is providing Trust members with pertinent information about the academy's strengths and weaknesses. However, there is no system in place for members of the Trust Board to engage in first hand monitoring of the work of the academy. Plans are in place to introduce a 'Raising Standards Committee' that intends to regularly check the academy's work. The Trust Board is in the process of reviewing a number of academy policies to ensure a shared approach across both academies.

External support

Academy staff have benefited from training provided by staff, including senior leaders from Aston Manor Academy. This training has focused on a wide range of aspects relating to keeping pupils safe, including e-safety and signs of child abuse. The local authority has assisted the Trust Board in identifying suitable leadership for the academy. Staff have also received helpful guidance from the local authority behaviour support service.

Priorities for further improvement

- Develop a structured programme for teaching pupils throughout the academy about different types of families and relationships.

- Ensure that the members of the Trust Board have procedures in place to check for themselves the impact of the actions being taken by senior leaders to improve the academy.
- Develop an efficient system for checking patterns in behaviour across the academy.

Her Majesty's Inspectors will continue to monitor the school and will consider this is in determining the timing of the next full inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Birmingham local authority, the Secretary of State for Education, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department for Education. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Usha Devi

Her Majesty's Inspector