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8 May 2015

Mr Daniel Berry
Headteacher
St George's School: A Church of England Academy
Cherry Tree Road
Blackpool
Lancashire
FY4 4PH

Dear Mr Berry

No formal designation monitoring inspection of St George's School: A Church of England Academy

Following my visit with Jonathan Smart, Additional Inspector, to your academy on 6 May 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This monitoring 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 academy.

Evidence

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. Other academy documentation was scrutinised including the academy development plan, minutes of governors' meetings and student attendance and early leaving data. Inspectors met with the headteacher, the designated senior leader responsible for safeguarding, groups of staff including college heads and form tutors, groups of students and two representatives of the governing body. Inspectors met with staff responsible for monitoring and supporting the welfare of students, the academy nurse practitioner and the academy chaplain. Inspectors also met with a representative of the local authority and a representative of the local authority safeguarding team. Inspectors reviewed the academy's own records of parental and student feedback.

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

The academy's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

Context

The academy is an average-sized secondary school. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is below average and few students speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students who are disabled or who have special educational needs is approximately at the national average. The proportion of students eligible for support through the pupil premium is high when compared to the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding to support students known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority. Levels of mobility for students are at the national average and turnover of staff is low. The predecessor school converted to academy status in 2013 under the Cidari (Blackburn Diocese Multi Academy Trust) umbrella. A new headteacher was appointed in January 2013 and two new deputy headteachers took up posts in September 2013.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Inspectors conducted walks around the academy during lessons, breaks and lunchtime and talked formally and informally with many students. Students expressed high confidence with regard to their safety. Students spoke positively about their respect for and trust in academy staff. Student behaviour during break and lunchtime was good. The academy presents a harmonious and well-ordered community. Students talk and engage in a relaxed and respectful way with each other. They make a strong contribution to a very supportive and inclusive community. Students are keen to take responsibility and many participate in academy life as prefects, mentors, ambassadors, school council representatives and form leaders. They are courteous with adults. Pastoral support systems are strong and comprehensive. The academy has a full-time practitioner nurse who advises on a wide range of medical and personal issues including mental and sexual health. Other specialist welfare staff focus on attendance, student welfare and have strong links with external agencies. College heads, form tutors and the academy's full-time chaplain offer support and guidance for students. There is a strong listening culture embedded within the academy. Students adopt safe practice and receive good guidance in how to be safe and keep safe including e-safety. Attendance rates are at the national average. Students told inspectors that there were few incidents of bullying and where they occurred they were dealt with quickly and were resolved. Students confirmed that when they have concerns they know who to approach and have the confidence to do so. Those parents who have responded to the on-line Ofsted questionnaire (Parent View) expressed confidence that their children are safe in the academy and this was also reflected in recent academy parental questionnaires.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

Appropriate and robust procedures and practices are in place to ensure the safeguarding of students. Senior staff with responsibilities for safeguarding have ensured comprehensive and effective systems are in place and all managers and

staff have a clear understanding of these arrangements. Documentation and case studies scrutinised confirm that these procedures are followed when safeguarding cases arise. Academy guidance and documentation indicate that safe practices in recruitment are followed for all staff. The designated senior leader for safeguarding has a very well-defined role and this has had a significant impact on ensuring student safeguarding is a priority; there is a philosophy of openness that pervades both staff and student cultures. All staff have appropriate and regular training on safeguarding. First-aid training is regular and current and is evaluated and updated frequently. The systems for dealing with medicines are robust. The academy's arrangements for checking the suitability of staff meet statutory requirements. The academy's behaviour log is detailed on the actions and impact of actions in relation to behaviour and bullying incidents. Records pertaining to safeguarding are detailed and comprehensive. However, safeguarding documentation on the academy website was not always updated and does not always reflect the robust practice that the academy has established. Documentation on the management and use of academy data outside academy premises needs greater clarification in order to reflect current robust practice.

College heads, form tutors and teaching staff are well aware of safeguarding procedures and systems. They are clear about whistle-blowing procedures. Academy staff feel well supported by senior staff. Safeguarding is regarded as everybody's responsibility. Staff receive annual updates on safeguarding including e-safety and the use of social media networks. Weekly email communications from senior managers with staff act as both an update and reminder of aspects of safety and the importance of adherences to procedures and practice.

A particular strength of the academy is its spiritual, moral, social and cultural education programme. This comprehensive and well-designed programme offers an opportunity to introduce students throughout their time at the academy to the key local and national safeguarding topics and concerns. Investment in time and resources has had a significant impact on the quality of the materials which focus on age-related themes, for example child sexual exploitation and bullying as well as the nature and responsibilities of citizenship within a democratic society. Some 30 staff have been trained as lead tutors in the programme. The programme provides students with a range of skills to help them make positive choices both at school and in later life.

Governors understand their safeguarding responsibilities. In the current academic year a new committee with responsibility for monitoring and evaluating safeguarding and student behaviour has been established and this reports to the full governing body. Governors have good links with pastoral and welfare staff and keep well informed on safeguarding issues, student behaviour and related matters.

External support

The academy works well with a number of external organisations to support the learning and well-being of students and particularly disadvantaged and vulnerable

students. The academy has support from Cidari which is currently undertaking a review of safeguarding and safer recruitment policy. The academy also belongs to a network of good and outstanding colleges and schools with whom practice is shared and reviewed. Strong links with the local authority have been maintained so as to inform better on safeguarding concerns and issues relating to the wider Blackpool community.

Priorities for further improvement

- Update safeguarding documentation, particularly on the academy website, so that it better reflects the academy's current robust practices.
- Ensure that academy documentation on the use of data outside academy premises has clarity and reflects current academy practice.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Blackpool, to the Secretary of State for Education and the Chair of the Governing Body. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Patrick Geraghty
Her Majesty's Inspector