

Tribal
Kings Orchard,
One Queen Street,
Bristol
BS2 0HQ

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01173115246
Direct F 01173150430
Direct email: Sara.Whalley@tribalgroup.com

10 July 2015

Ms L Cherry
Headteacher
Hillary Primary School
Hillary Street
Pleck
Walsall
West Midlands
WS2 9BP

Dear Ms Cherry

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Hillary Primary School

Following my visit with Heather Simpson, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 9 July 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 school.

Evidence

My colleague and I scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. We met with you and the designated leader for safeguarding, the vice chair of the governing body and a local authority attendance officer. We spoke to parents and carers at the start of the school day and spoke to pupils at break time and lunchtime. Governors' minutes and records of attendance were reviewed, as well as the school's records of behaviour and bullying incidents.

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

The school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

Context

There are currently 603 pupils in the school, which is much more than in most primary schools. The large majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The largest groups are of Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi heritage. Most pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is similar to the average nationally.

Behaviour and Safety

During the inspection pupils behaved well. They moved around the school building sensibly and were courteous and respectful to adults. Pupils played cooperatively together at break times and chatted sociably while having lunch. The pupils who spoke to us said that behaviour is usually good, both in lessons and on the playgrounds. The parents who spoke to us were all confident that their children were safe and well looked after in school. Parents said that you and the teachers are approachable and helpful and any concerns are quickly addressed. Pupils explained that bullying is rare and were confident that any incidents would be sorted out by the adults in school. Pupils were able to explain clearly how school staff teach them to stay safe in different circumstances. For example, pupils have been taught how to cross roads safely, how to respond if there is a fire and how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. Pupils were also clear about the importance of treating everyone fairly and with respect. They know that they should inform an adult if they hear anyone using derogatory language.

Attendance last year was below average. Leaders are now tackling absence more robustly and are promoting and celebrating good attendance more effectively. As a result, attendance is improving and the number of pupils who are persistently absent is reducing. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and of White British and Eastern European pupils is lower than that of other pupils in the school.

Leadership and Management

You and other school leaders rightly place a high priority on pupils' well-being and safety. The safeguarding policy and procedures have been updated to reflect the most recent statutory requirements and are well understood and carefully followed by the adults in school. Safeguarding is discussed at every staff meeting to ensure that all staff are aware of possible signs of abuse or neglect. Staff have received effective training which means that they know how to respond to any concerns about a pupil's well-being and safety. For example, they know about possible indicators of radicalisation and of female genital mutilation.

Leaders ensure that clear and thorough records are kept of any incidents or concerns regarding pupils' well-being and safety and of the actions taken by the school and other agencies. The designated safeguarding leader makes appropriate and timely referrals to other agencies including social services and the police.

Day-to-day procedures to keep pupils safe are appropriate and several of these were observed during the inspection. For example, after the start of the school day, gates are locked so that visitors have to be admitted by a member of staff who checks their identity and requires them to sign in and wear a badge. Levels of supervision were good at break and lunchtimes and the school has clear procedures for following up any absences promptly to ensure that pupils are safe. Thorough and up-to-date risk assessments are completed for a wide range of school activities and for every school trip.

You keep records of behaviour incidents and of any bullying which occurs in school and check these records regularly to identify any patterns and trends. This information shows that the overall number of incidents is reducing over time. A new electronic system for recording behaviour and bullying incidents has been introduced but this is not yet fully effective and as result, it is difficult to monitor different types of incident or to evaluate the success of any follow-up actions.

Several leaders and governors are trained in safer recruitment procedures so that there is a trained person on every interview panel. These leaders check that references are collected and retained for all staff and include a direct question about the individual's suitability to work with children. Interview questions and notes are also retained and include questions which establish the candidate's awareness and understanding of child protection issues. Leaders ensure that the appropriate checks are made on the suitability of staff prior to appointment. Although the relevant checks have all been made, the single central record (SCR) of these checks, which is maintained by Walsall local authority, had some omissions such as the dates that some checks were completed. These omissions were addressed by the end of the inspection.

Governors have received training so that they are aware of their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding. Minutes from meetings of the governing body show that governors ask questions and provide a good level of challenge to school leaders. For example, at a recent meeting, a governor asked about the school's ability to respond to any indication that pupils or their families were expressing extremist views or at risk of radicalisation.

External support

The local authority has helped school leaders to carry out a detailed audit of their arrangements for safeguarding. School leaders and governors are using the information from this audit well to prioritise further improvements. The local authority has also provided effective training for staff and governors which has helped to ensure that they have a good understanding of their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding. The local authority has not ensured that the SCR has been fully maintained to show when every check has been completed.

Priorities for further improvement

- Continue to improve attendance so that it is at least in line with the average for primary schools nationally. In particular, staff should work with parents to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, White British pupils and Eastern European pupils.
- Improve the way that incidents of poor behaviour and bullying are recorded and analysed so that this information can be used to identify patterns and trends so that further improvements can be made.
- Ensure that all checks on the single central record are dated to show when they have been completed.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Walsall, 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

Morag Kophamel
Her Majesty's Inspector