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Mr Joseph Prendergast
Headteacher
Wennington Hall School
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Dear Mr Prendergast

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Wennington Hall School

Following my visit to your school on 1 March 2016 with Christine Scully, Social Care Regulatory Inspector, 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, aspects of the effectiveness of leadership and management in the school (including governance) and the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils at Wennington Hall School.

Evidence

We scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. We met with you, other senior leaders, groups of pupils, parents, governors, teachers and teaching assistants. We visited a number of classrooms during lesson time and also observed pupils as they went about their day-to-day activities.

We scrutinised a range of documents provided by the school, including the school's safeguarding policy, the whistleblowing policy and the complaints policy. We also gave consideration to the school's monitoring and recording systems related to pupils' behaviour and safety.

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

The school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

Context

Wennington Hall School is a day and residential school situated in a former country house in Wennington, a village in Lancashire. The school currently has 80 boys on roll aged between the ages of 11 and 16. Of these pupils, a large proportion attend on a residential basis. A high proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. All pupils are identified as having special educational needs related to their behaviour. A small proportion of the pupils have been on roll at the school for less than a year. The school has a high adult to pupil ratio. There is good stability in the staff team with only a small proportion of teachers and support staff being at the school for less than a year.

Main findings

The headteacher's opinion that 'Wennington Hall is an orderly establishment where high standards, hard work and sensible behaviour are the expected norm', is accurate. Without exception, everything that was observed, read, discussed or scrutinised by inspectors corroborates this view.

Pupils are safe at the school. Parents agree that their children are safe in school and say they know this because their children are happy in school, they are eager to come to school and their self-confidence has bloomed. Pupils spoke lucidly about why they feel safe. Those who spoke to the inspector said that they can speak to adults about anything that makes them unhappy. The school's key worker system ensures that pupils always have someone to turn to when they have concerns. The school's records show that adults take appropriate action swiftly to ensure pupils remain safe.

The school's records, along with inspectors' discussions with pupils and staff, show that incidents relating to smoking or the use of drugs by pupils are few and far between. Records also show that, on the few occasions when incidents relating to smoking and drug misuse occur, leaders take swift and appropriate action. The school's smoking cessation programme is successful in helping pupils to reduce their dependence on cigarettes. These actions are effective in promoting improvements in pupils' health and well-being.

The school's safeguarding practices are excellent and leaders' procedures to monitor, record and evaluate the impact of its safeguarding policy are strong. However, on occasion, incident logs are vague about the nature of pupils' behaviour and the actions taken by adults. On the few occasions this does happen, leaders are not able to pinpoint precisely any patterns and trends which may occur.

Bullying, racist and homophobic incidents are uncommon at the school. The pupils who responded to a confidential survey carried out by the lead inspector were overwhelming in their agreement that teachers would not tolerate the use of homophobic language by pupils. Furthermore, these pupils agreed that school would

welcome and provide the appropriate support and guidance for pupils who identified themselves as homosexual or bisexual, for example. This is a strong indication that the school's provision for pupils' personal development and their preparation for life in modern Britain is strong.

Staff at the school are trained well in how to keep pupils safe. All staff complete a comprehensive induction programme when they start at the school. This programme includes training in child protection along with other wider safeguarding issues such as health and safety, fire safety, holding pupils safely and de-escalation strategies to manage pupils' behaviour. All staff take part in regular and frequent refresher training relating to safeguarding. Recent training for all staff included safe use of the internet, child sexual exploitation, and radicalisation and extremism. This action strengthens adults' awareness of potential risks to pupils and contributes effectively to the well-being of all pupils at Wennington Hall School.

The school is effective in taking every opportunity to teach pupils how to keep themselves safe. Classrooms, and other areas where pupils learn, have copies of the pupil e-safety agreement along with clear and easy-to-follow fire evacuation instructions, to remind pupils how to stay safe. The 'Boys' Notice Board' provides valuable information to pupils on how to keep themselves safe including ChildLine contact details, the names of key safeguarding officers in the school and newspaper clippings showing the dangers of using e-cigarettes. Another display, seen by inspectors, shows an excellent record of pupils' work, with the Takeaway Theatre Company, to build their resilience against bullying. These proactive steps by the school contribute significantly to promoting the effectiveness of safeguarding in the school.

The high expectations, seen in everything that the school does, are unquestionable. During the inspection, inspectors saw nothing but exemplary behaviour by well-mannered and polite pupils. The school's resources, to enable pupils to experience top-quality vocational studies, outdoor education, farm studies and adventure sports, are exceptional. The high standards set across the school promote a calm and assured atmosphere which ensures the health, safety and well-being of all pupils at the school.

External support

Leaders make excellent use of a wide range of external support partners to ensure the school's safeguarding practices are effective. Leaders commission the local authority and other providers to ensure training for all staff in how to keep pupils safe is first rate.

Priorities for further improvement

- Strengthen further leaders' analysis of the information they have about the safeguarding of pupils by:

- giving pupils even more opportunity to add their comments when incidents are recorded in the school's incident logs
- ensuring descriptions of pupils' behaviours and adults' actions are sharp when recorded in the incident logs.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Lancashire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Drew Crawshaw
Her Majesty's Inspector