

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



9 May 2016

Lorraine Warmer
Park Lane School
Park Lane
Macclesfield
Cheshire
SK11 8JR

Dear Lorraine Warmer

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Park Lane School

Following my visit to your school on 28 April 2016, 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 at the school. In particular, the inspection sought to establish:

- whether the school's policies and procedures are effective in keeping pupils safe, particularly when using the hydrotherapy pool
- the views of parents about the safeguarding of pupils and how effectively the school communicates with parents
- how effectively leaders resolve any parental concerns.

Evidence

I scrutinised the single central record (the checks made on behalf of the governing body on the suitability of adults to work with children) and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. I also checked minutes of meetings of the governing body, risk assessments completed by the school, health and safety audits and hygiene reports. I also considered the results of a recent pupil questionnaire. I met with the headteacher, a group of parents, the chair of the governing body and the governor responsible for safeguarding, a group of staff, including teaching assistants, the swimming coach and physiotherapist. I also held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

Context

Park Lane is a small school for pupils with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties which adversely affect their physical abilities, speech, language and communication. Many pupils also have additional health complications. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. The proportion of pupils of minority ethnic heritage is well below average as is the proportion of pupils whose first language is not or believed not to be English. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is broadly in line with the national average. (Pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.) The school is on the campus of the Macclesfield Learning Zone, which includes Macclesfield Academy and Macclesfield College. Pupils in key stage 4 are based in Macclesfield Academy. Sixth-form students are based in Macclesfield College.

Park Lane is a happy place where dignity, respect and care permeate all aspects of school life. A strong sense of teamwork is at the heart of everything the school does. Consequently, leaders and staff work well together to promote the safety and well-being of pupils at the school.

Senior leaders, governors and staff place a high priority on keeping pupils safe. The single central record is detailed and contains the checks required to ensure that adults are suitable to work with pupils. Nonetheless, the school needed to make minor administrative additions to the record during the inspection to ensure that it fully met statutory requirements. Leaders ensure that safeguarding is an element of the induction procedures for new members of staff joining the school.

The headteacher, this year, has worked closely with the local authority to ensure that safeguarding training meets the specific needs of staff at the school. For example, by giving more comprehensive guidance on the reporting and recording of safeguarding incidents or accidents. As a result, members of staff spoken to during the inspection were clear about signs of abuse and what they should do if they suspected that a pupil was at risk.

Senior leaders and governors regularly review and revise a broad range of policies and procedures to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Risk assessments, for example, are diligently undertaken and are used effectively to put into place actions to mitigate any identified concerns. In the hydrotherapy pool, for instance, an extra member of staff is always at the side of the pool to 'spot' and respond to any dangers.

Governors effectively hold senior leaders to account for the impact of their actions in relation to keeping pupils safe. Records of meetings of the governing body show that safeguarding has been given greater prominence in recent months. The governor with responsibility for safeguarding undertakes annual checks of school policies to ensure that they meet requirements. However, the current safeguarding policy, while giving appropriate guidance to staff on how to keep pupils safe, makes reference to statutory guidance that has since been updated. Governors ensure that appropriate training has been undertaken by staff in response to any issues that have arisen relating to pupils' safety.

Since the time of the previous inspection, leaders have reviewed how pupils are kept safe when using the hydrotherapy pool. The swimming policy has been amended and now includes clear guidance on how any incidents should be recorded, reported and responded to. Poolside training has been delivered to staff so that they are aware of any potential hazards and have the skills to act in an emergency. As a result, any risks posed by pupils using the hydrotherapy pool have been minimised effectively.

Staff expertise is utilised to ensure that the complex and broad range of pupils' care and well-being needs are well met. A number of staff, for example, volunteer to support pupils who require medical devices for feeding. The school nurse regularly checks the skills of staff to ensure that they are competent in any procedures they provide. Records are meticulously kept and link precisely with pupils' care plans.

Leaders ensure that visitors to school from external agencies, such as the local NHS trust, are suitable to work with children and have had appropriate safeguarding training. However, not all visiting staff have had the opportunity to read fully the school's safeguarding policy. Consequently, a very small number of support staff are unsure to whom to report safeguarding concerns if they related to the headteacher.

The school environment is bright, welcoming and safe. Corridors are kept free of obstacles to ensure that pupils can move about freely and safely. Since the previous inspection, a new outdoor play area in the early years has been developed. As a result, children have greater space to explore and learn through a wide range of purposeful activities. Outdoor equipment is well maintained and is frequently checked to ensure that it is safe to use. Nonetheless, during the inspection a minor potential hazard, relating to a lack of protective padding on a metal gate, was highlighted to the headteacher by the inspector.

Those parents spoken to during the inspection have a highly positive view of the school. They state that leaders and staff have an excellent understanding of the specific needs of their children and this information is used well to ensure that they are kept safe and happy in school. They also say that communication between school and parents is a significant strength. Home/school books, for instance, are used by staff and parents to frequently keep in touch and share successes or concerns. Several parents spoke positively about the newly

introduced social media page that is allowing parents to keep in contact with one another and share advice and support. Furthermore, parents say that they value the ease with which they are able to speak to staff and leaders when they have any concerns. As a result, issues that arise are dealt with swiftly before becoming a significant problem.

Visits to lessons evidence the high-quality care, guidance and support that pupils are given to help them to access their learning. Teachers and teaching assistants utilise a wide variety of communication systems to ensure that all pupils are included in activities. Teaching assistants know the pupils they are responsible for very well. They respond to small changes in body language or behaviour quickly, amending learning activities so that pupils are able to access their lessons. On a small number of occasions, adults work on their own with pupils, for example, to deliver a specialist therapy. However, the school does not give clear guidance to staff about when this is appropriate and what actions should be taken to mitigate any safeguarding concerns.

External support

The local authority provides light touch support as it has confidence in the school's leadership and management and safeguarding measures. However, leaders have worked closely with the local authority to ensure that recent safeguarding training was tailored specifically to the needs of the school.

Priorities for further improvement

- review and revise safeguarding policies so that all references to statutory guidance are up to date
- ensure that all staff, not employed directly by the school, read the safeguarding policy so that they understand clearly the route to follow should they have safeguarding concerns about the headteacher
- provide all staff with clear guidance in relation to lone working with pupils.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the director of children's services for Cheshire East. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Martin Bell
Her Majesty's Inspector