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Ms Louisa Lochner
Headteacher
Gateway Academy
Capland Street
London
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Dear Ms Lochner

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Gateway Academy

Following my visit to your school on 5 May 2017, 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

During my visit, I scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. These included a wide range of policies, school records, the local authority safeguarding audit and the results of surveys to capture the views of parents. I met with you and your senior leaders, and with a group of pupils. I also met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and a group of teachers.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

Context

Gateway Academy is much larger than the average-sized primary school, with 684 pupils on roll. Nearly all pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, the proportion who speak English as an additional language is very high, and 57% of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and need support, is above average. The proportion with an education, health and care plan is average. Pupil mobility (the number of pupils who start and leave school midway through the year) is higher than average.

Safeguarding

Leaders, including governors, have established rigorous arrangements to ensure that safeguarding and child protection are effective. The deputy headteacher currently in charge of safeguarding leads the school's work in this area extremely well. The systems and procedures for ensuring the safety and welfare of pupils are thorough, robust and woven into the fabric of the school. As a result, there is a strong safeguarding culture. Pupils are safe, their needs are met most successfully and their behaviour is impeccable.

Thorough record keeping enables leaders to track those vulnerable pupils who have been referred to the local authority's social services accurately. Referrals are followed up tenaciously. Consequently, pupils are provided with support at the earliest opportunity. School leaders often go the extra mile to ensure that pupils get the best from their time at school. For example, the progress and welfare of vulnerable pupils are discussed regularly at 'family group' meetings. These ensure that no vulnerable pupil is allowed to fall between the cracks. The school has a strong partnership with the local authority's social services and works in tandem with social services to help ensure that support is well coordinated.

Training for all staff is thorough. Staff are provided with regular and up-to-date training about how to deal with safeguarding concerns. This includes female genital mutilation, extremism and radicalisation, and gangs. As a result, staff have a very secure understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. They know how to recognise the signs of abuse and the procedures for reporting any concerns. Staff have full access to the school's comprehensive policies and guidance, including the latest version of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. Staff also know how to recognise the signs of radicalisation and the importance of recording concerns.

A strong feature of staff's understanding of safeguarding is that they recognise the importance of using even the smallest piece of information. As one teacher noted, all information is part of the 'jigsaw puzzle'. This is telling because it demonstrates how effectively leaders ensure that keeping children safe is rooted in the school's culture.

Senior leaders have a clear understanding of the issues relating to safer recruitment and ensure that the procedures for vetting staff are comprehensive. The academy's school's central register is maintained thoroughly. It includes all the required information and checks on the suitability of staff, including governors and volunteers. It is fully up to date.

Governors are involved extensively in the school's work to safeguard pupils effectively. They have appointed a successor to the deputy headteacher currently in charge of safeguarding to help ensure that child protection procedures remain strong. Both the chair of the governing body and the lead governor for safeguarding have a secure grasp of the school's arrangements, including for safer recruitment. They play a central role in holding leaders to account for the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements and child protection processes. For example, the lead governor for safeguarding regularly reviews the single central register to ensure that it complies with requirements and is maintained properly. Evidence from the minutes of governors' meetings shows that safeguarding and child protection are considered as a matter of course. Issues are followed up thoroughly.

Parents are positive about the school's work to keep their children safe. In a recent survey conducted by the school, 95% of parents who responded agreed that their child feels safe at Gateway Academy, and 96% of parents said that they would recommend the school to others.

Pupils, too, say that they always feel safe at school. They enjoy school, they say, because 'it's a safe place'. Pupils are knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe, including in relation to road safety, talking to strangers and on the internet. They know whom to turn to if they are worried about anything. The pupils I spoke with were positive about the 'worry box', where pupils can leave a note that will be picked up by the school council and a teacher.

External support

The strong partnership with the local authority, including the designated officer for safeguarding, plays a central role in helping the school to keep pupils safe. The impact of this partnership is evident in the school's robust and rigorous systems, and in its everyday practice. The local authority judges that the school's procedures for safeguarding are secure and reliable.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that planned changes to the senior leadership team do not compromise the quality and effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements and child protection processes.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools

commissioner and the director of children's services for Westminster. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Brian Oppenheim
Her Majesty's Inspector