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11 November 2015

Mr Mark Swaine
Springfield School
Crewe Green Road
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 5HS

Dear Mr Swaine

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Springfield School

Following my visit to your school on 21 October 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 Springfield School.

Evidence

I scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. I also gave consideration to a report provided by the local authority's children's safeguarding unit.

I met with you, other senior leaders, groups of pupils, parents, the Chair of the Governing Body, teachers and teaching assistants. I visited a number of classrooms during lesson time and also observed pupils as they arrived at and left the school and during lunchtime.

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

The school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

Context

The school currently has 132 pupils on roll aged between four and 19. Of these pupils, a small proportion are from minority ethnic groups and have a language other than English as their first language. An above-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. All pupils are identified as having special educational needs. 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.

An ongoing investigation by external agencies has identified a number of weaknesses in the school's systems to safeguard pupils. A review of the school's safeguarding policy and practice, at the request of the headteacher and governors, corroborates this view. The review also identifies, accurately, a number of actions which should be taken by the school to ensure that its safeguarding procedures are of the highest standard.

Main findings

Information evaluated by the inspector during the inspection indicates that the school's safeguarding practices are appropriate. The school's procedures to monitor, record and evaluate the impact of its safeguarding policy require improvement.

Pupils are safe at the school. Pupils spoke clearly about why they feel safe and also how to keep themselves safe when using the internet or when on activities out of school. Those who spoke to the inspector said that they can speak to adults about anything that makes them unhappy. The school's annual pupil survey echoes this view. Parents agree that their children are safe in school and say they know this because their children are happy in school and happy to come to school.

There are strong relationships between pupils and adults at the school. Adults know the pupils well and understand pupils' specific needs. The school's medical team is effective in ensuring that pupils receive appropriate care throughout the school day. Good communication between the school's medical team and parents ensures that any changes to pupils' specific needs are identified and acted upon quickly.

The school has appropriate practices in place to keep pupils safe. Some of the systems to gather and record information about pupils' safety are not always followed systematically. Leaders do not analyse, robustly, the information they have about pupils' welfare. Therefore, they do not focus sharply on how the care and welfare of pupils can be improved further. For example, some pupils' care plans do not give directions which pinpoint precisely how to meet the pupils' specific welfare needs.

Leaders have taken adequate steps to ensure that policies related to safeguarding are reviewed, made up to date and are also appropriate to the setting. Leaders recognise the need to ensure that they monitor robustly the effectiveness of safeguarding policies.

Recent training for all staff included an introduction to wider safeguarding issues, such as child sexual exploitation and extremism. This action has strengthened adults' awareness of potential risks to pupils. Leaders need to ensure a systematic approach to the recording of training for all staff in the safeguarding of children is established, so that any gaps can be identified and remedied quickly.

Leaders have put in place an appropriate induction programme for staff who join the school. However, leadership and monitoring of the programme is not systematic. Consequently, the quality of the training received by staff who are new to the school is patchy and does not contribute well enough to the safeguarding of children in school.

The school's senior designated leader for the safeguarding of children has received relevant and up-to-date training. Leaders, recognising previous weaknesses, have taken action to strengthen governors' understanding of safeguarding by commissioning the local authority to deliver appropriate training for all governors.

External support

Agencies, such as the children's safeguarding unit, have provided effective support for the school. Leaders have begun to use their recommendations to strengthen the school's safeguarding procedures. For example, following feedback from the children's safeguarding unit, leaders have: ensured out-of-date policies have been removed from the school's notice boards, made the school's single central record compliant with current statutory requirements, begun the process to review the role of the governor with responsibility for safeguarding, set dates for appropriate training to be delivered to staff and leaders, begun a systematic review of the school's policies and procedures relating to safeguarding so that they adhere closely to statutory guidance, such as *Keeping children safe in education* (July 2015).

Priorities for further improvement

- Draw up and implement effectively an action plan to meet all of the recommendations identified in the report (9 October 2015) produced by the local authority's children's safeguarding unit.
- In particular leaders should:
 - ensure systems to monitor, record and evaluate the impact of safeguarding policies are effective
 - analyse robustly the information they collect about pupils' welfare and focus sharply on how safeguarding practices can be improved further
 - ensure safeguarding training for all staff is recorded systematically and take action promptly when gaps are identified

- ensure all governors have an appropriate and up-to-date understanding of safeguarding.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Cheshire East Council, 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

Drew Crawshaw

Her Majesty's Inspector