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Mrs Jacqui Scott
Worle Community School
Redwing Drive
Mead Vale
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Somerset
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Dear Mrs Scott

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Worle Community School

Following my visit with Duncan Millard and Ian Grant, Ofsted Inspectors, to your school on 22–23 November 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 arrangements at the school.

Evidence

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements and met with the head of school, the executive principal, senior leaders, a group of staff, groups of pupils, governors and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors visited lessons to observe pupils' behaviour and their learning.

Key documentation was scrutinised, including information on pupils' attendance and behaviour, exclusion rates, school development plans and key policies. The 25 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted questionnaire, were also considered.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

Context

Worle Community School is a large secondary school with 1,390 pupils. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is in line with the national average. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups, those who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are much lower than the national averages. The number of pupils who leave, or join, other than at the end of Year 11 or start of Year 7 is broadly average.

Since the previous inspection, which deemed the school to require special measures, you have been seconded from The Priory Learning Trust as head of school. You lead the school alongside an executive principal from Priory Community School – an Academy Trust. The school is in the process of becoming an academy school sponsored by The Priory Learning Trust. Three new senior leaders have been seconded from this trust since the previous inspection to add capacity to the leadership of the school. An interim executive board, consisting of five members, replaced the governing body in June 2016.

The effectiveness of leadership and management in ensuring that safeguarding and child protection arrangements keep pupils safe

You have brought about a significant, positive change in the standard of pupils' behaviour at the school and the policies, practice and culture of safeguarding in a short period of time. Pupils, both in and out of lessons, generally behave well, and all the outside areas of the school are seen by pupils as safe. Pupils wear their uniform very well and take care of their school site.

New safeguarding policies and procedures have been adopted since September 2016; these policies are all compliant with the most recent Department for Education guidance. Regular and effective training ensures that staff understand the procedures and warning signs to support and identify any pupil who may be at risk. Developing the culture of safeguarding across the school has been, and still is, a high priority. As one member of staff stated, 'Safeguarding used to be someone's responsibility. It is now everyone's responsibility.'

The single central record, which records background checks made on all staff, meets requirements. Robust procedures are in place to ensure that new staff joining the school are suitably checked for their appropriateness to work with children; all checks are carefully recorded. New staff receive effective induction training about the policies and procedures of safeguarding at the school. Staff read, and sign to confirm that they have read, the Department for Education's statutory guidance for schools, 'Keeping children safe in education'. Regular update training enables staff to develop an understanding of the warning signs that pupils may display if they are being, or are at risk of being, harmed. Most staff spoken to during the inspection could articulate the key signs well. Any concerns referred to the designated safeguarding lead are recorded rigorously and an appropriate and timely response put in place.

Leaders work closely and effectively with external agencies to ensure that each pupil in need receives the individualised support they require. The recording of recent cases is strong, with a clear chronology of events, meetings, support agreed, expected impact and review meetings. Parents are fully involved in decision-making about their child when appropriate. Historic records, however, lack the level of details of the more recent cases. Leaders fully acknowledge this and are working to rectify this issue as a matter of urgency.

A revised behaviour policy was implemented in October 2016. The staged approach to managing behaviour is understood well by pupils. Alongside recognising inappropriate behaviour, pupils appreciate staff praising them when they demonstrate positive attitudes and conduct. Pupils indicate that this approach helps them to modify, and improve, their behaviour. However, pupils are very clear that the application of this policy by teachers is inconsistent; inspectors agree with this.

The importance of the role of the tutor has been raised significantly. Tutors adopt both a monitoring and mentoring role with their tutees. Pupils value having opportunities to discuss their positive and negative behaviour and appreciate the guidance that their tutors provide. The tutor programme delivers many aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Younger pupils engage well with this and speak positively about their learning. Older pupils in Year 10 have a more negative view of this. Year 10 pupils have limited understanding of careers that they could aspire to, as no cohesive, effective strategy exists for the delivery of careers education or guidance. In addition, the tutor programme helps pupils understand the basics of how to stay safe when using the internet, for example not giving out your personal details. However, pupils have a limited understanding of the risks that could be posed through radicalisation and extremism.

Work to educate pupils on different types of bullying and the unacceptance of bullying has been effective. Pupils are clear that the amount of bullying has decreased. They have confidence that bullying of pupils because of their race, disability or sexual orientation would not occur. Very clear procedures exist to report bullying in person or anonymously. Pupils state that staff take incidents of bullying seriously. Parents who responded to the Parent View survey have a more negative view of the school's ability to deal with incidents of bullying. Leaders recognise that, historically, communication to parents of the resolution of their concerns has not been timely or effective. A clear strategy now exists to ensure communication with parents is much improved.

The importance of good attendance had been raised across the school; pupils articulated their clear understanding of this during conversations. Improved support mechanisms have recently been put in place to work closely alongside pupils and their families when a pupil's attendance is too low. Pupils' individual needs are better understood and more personalised help is put in place. Since this initiative has only recently been implemented, its impact on raising attendance is yet to be seen.

The on-site 'Sir Richard Branson Centre' (the SRB) provision, to support pupils' academic, social, emotional and behavioural needs is highly effective. Each pupil in the SRB has a short-term plan to provide them with the intensive support needed while their mainstream teachers maintain an oversight of their academic progress. Pupils are successfully reintegrated back to their normal timetable.

In classrooms, pupils show much-improved attitudes to their learning since the previous inspection. Relationships between pupils and teachers are usually positive. Pupils take much more pride in their work, in particular with presentation. However, teachers do not consistently plan learning which sufficiently challenges, engages and inspires pupils. Some teachers plan work to contain pupils instead of really challenging their thinking. This can lead to pupils' conduct being less positive and it inhibits the progress they make.

The interim executive board (IEB) is formed from people of deep educational experience. As a result, they govern the school highly effectively. The IEB understands well the strengths and weaknesses of the school and acknowledges that there is still much work to be done. IEB members provide stringent challenge to leaders to ensure that the school is a safe place and to improve other key aspects of the school so that pupils receive the quality of education that they deserve.

External support

A supportive and effective partnership has been established between The Priory Learning Trust and the local authority to ensure that all safeguarding policies and practice meet statutory requirements.

Priorities for further improvement

- Teachers to raise their expectations of what pupils are able to achieve.
- Teachers to provide pupils with work that challenges, engages and motivates them.
- Ensure that a cohesive, comprehensive and effective careers education and guidance strategy is in place to raise pupils' expectations of what they can achieve beyond school.
- Fully embed, monitor and evaluate new systems and processes to maximise their impact, in particular to raise attendance.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the interim executive board and the director of children's services for North Somerset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Simon Rowe
Her Majesty's Inspector