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Wendy Heslop
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Dear Mrs Heslop

No formal designation inspection of Cramlington Learning Village

Following my visit with Alison Aitchison, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 11 November 2020, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This 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 wished to determine the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements at the school as concerns had been raised with Ofsted.

Evidence

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. We met with the headteacher, groups of pupils, teaching and support staff. We also met with the designated safeguarding leader, the special educational needs coordinator, four governors (including the chair of governors and the governor responsible for safeguarding) and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors observed pupils during social times and on arrival to school and an inspector spoke on the telephone to three parents.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

Context

Cramlington Learning Village is larger than the average-sized secondary school. The vast majority of pupils attending the school are of White British heritage. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils on roll is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is below average. A new chair of the governing body took up post in September 2019.

Main Findings

Leaders and governors demonstrate consistently strong values in relation to keeping pupils safe. They are reflective and continuously look for new ways to improve safeguarding. For example, leaders have worked diligently with external agencies to investigate and respond to the impact that poverty can have on pupils' safety.

Staff log and closely monitor incidents of poor behaviour, including bullying. Pupil files include wide-ranging and relevant information which safeguarding leaders use to support pupils effectively. Child protection files are thorough and maintained in accordance with statutory guidelines. Leaders develop comprehensive safeguarding plans to monitor and respond to pupils' individual needs. This ensures that leaders anticipate the potential risks to pupils and take steps to mitigate them.

Staff regularly attend safeguarding training. Recently, staff took part in training relating to knife crime, children's mental health issues, domestic abuse and drug trafficking known as 'county lines'. Leaders' safeguarding actions have helped ensure that staff understand clearly the tell-tale signs signifying a pupil may be suffering, or likely to suffer, harm.

Specially trained staff meet weekly to review pupil safeguarding referrals during focused 'triage' sessions. Following the meetings, and where possible, pupils are directed to relevant safeguarding professionals such as general practitioners, educational psychologists or trained school counsellors.

Support for pupils with SEND is strong. The pupils with SEND spoken to during the inspection had a detailed understanding of what constitutes bullying. Vulnerable pupils, including pupils with SEND, are well known to staff. This ensures that the school's usual safeguarding systems and processes can be amended, if necessary, to help pupils with SEND understand them more clearly. For example, safeguarding leaders ensure that pupils with SEND, who require support with their literacy or understanding, are provided with pictures of safe and unsafe situations or photographs of the designated safeguarding leaders.

Pupils say that bullying is rare. Bullying logs highlight that bullying does occur, but that the number of recorded incidents is relatively low. Pupils have confidence that staff take bullying seriously. Pupils learn about different types of bullying during lessons and days dedicated to pupils' well-being. Consequently, pupils'

understanding of what to do if they see or experience bullying is strong. Leaders have worked closely with pupils to set up support networks such as the 'Rainbow Alliance', a group of pupils eager to raise awareness of diversity and issues sometimes experienced by the lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGBT+) community.

School systems and procedures to keep pupils safe online are strong. Leaders have installed internet firewalls and keyword monitoring software to track and record pupils' online activity in school. In this way, staff are alert to pupils who may be using the internet improperly.

The school's own information highlights that, in lessons, the vast majority of pupils focus on their learning. However, there is a very small number of pupils who do not behave consistently well. For the most part, pupils' behave sensibly in and around the large school site. At social times, pupils are supervised effectively by staff. Pupils told inspectors that staff are swift to intervene if pupils' behaviour deteriorates at break and lunchtime.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. Nevertheless, some of the younger pupils in Years 7 and 8 told inspectors there were some locations around the school where they feel less safe, for example near to the gates at the end of the school day. However, pupils say that this is less to do with the site and more to do with some pupils who ride their bicycles on the pathways when others are exiting the building.

Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is prominent across the school. Over time, the PSHE leader has worked closely with senior leaders to ensure that the staff who teach PSHE are trained effectively. The curriculum is wide ranging and includes many opportunities for pupils to learn and develop personally, including five dedicated 'well-being' days during which the usual curriculum is suspended. Pupils enjoy learning about aspects of safeguarding and health such as cyber bullying, positive friendships, stress management and smoking.

Notwithstanding the strengths in the PSHE curriculum, pupils' understanding relating to the wider risks they may encounter in the locality varies. This is, in part, influenced by the content of the PSHE curriculum which does not cover in sufficient depth the safeguarding matters which are increasingly prevalent in the region, such as anti-social behaviour, drug trafficking, child sexual exploitation and violent crime.

Many governors have a long-standing association with the school. They are knowledgeable and passionate about helping pupils to see the best in others. Governors often hold leaders to account in relation to the quality of education pupils receive. However, the information that leaders present to governors relating to bullying is not specific enough. Consequently, governors are unable to talk with confidence, or challenge leaders robustly, about the extent, type and emerging patterns of bullying across the school.

The increased focus on bullying, coupled with recent feedback from pupils, has led to leaders seeking to improve the way pupils can report bullying. Leaders are

currently amending the school's website so that pupils can share a concern swiftly and/or anonymously should they wish.

External support

Leaders liaise effectively with partner primary schools to ensure that vulnerable pupils are well known to staff prior to starting the school in Year 7. This ensures that learning support and safeguarding measures can be planned in advance where appropriate.

The local authority link with school staff and pupils via the 'High Incident Needs Service' educational psychology team, in addition to staff from the speech and language therapy department. This supports pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs and improves pupils' ability to communicate a worry or concern effectively.

Priorities for further improvement

Leaders should:

- ensure they provide governors with regular and detailed safeguarding updates, including bullying logs, so that governors can challenge leaders and monitor patterns of bullying more closely;
- review school procedures at the end of the school day to ensure a safe and orderly exit from the school site;
- continue to review and improve the way pupils can report a bullying incident;
- refine the PSHE education curriculum to enable pupils to understand more clearly the safeguarding risks they may face in the locality and how to mitigate them;
- improve the behaviour of a very small minority of pupils who consistently disrupt lessons.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Northumberland. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lee Elliott
Her Majesty's Inspector