

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Shirley Arnold
St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Mill Race
Stanstead Abbots
Ware
Hertfordshire
SG12 8BZ

Dear Mrs Arnold

No formal designation monitoring inspection of St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Following my visit with Prue Rayner, Senior Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 21 September 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, aspects of the effectiveness of leadership and management in the school (including governance), and the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils at the school.

Evidence

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. Inspectors met with pupils, members of the governing body, including the chair, and a representative from the local authority. Child protection arrangements and attendance were reviewed. We examined records and documents relating to pupils' behaviour and well-being. I reviewed the school's policies on child protection and safeguarding, pupil behaviour, inclusion, special educational needs and/or disabilities, and anti-bullying. There were too few responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, for these to be taken into account. However, we took into account the recent results of the parent survey carried out by leaders.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

Context

St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is an average-sized school providing education for 236 pupils aged between four and 11 years. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils (those eligible for support through pupil premium funding) is lower than the national average. The number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school was judged as good at its most recent inspection in November 2014.

Safeguarding

During the summer term, Ofsted was made aware of concerns regarding the safeguarding systems, processes and policies in place and whether these were effective enough to keep pupils safe. Questions were also raised regarding whether incidents of a child protection nature were appropriately recorded and monitored, and whether other professional agencies were involved when necessary.

You took up the position of headteacher in September 2016. Prior to that, you were the substantive deputy headteacher at St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School. On appointment, you reviewed the processes and systems in place to safeguard pupils, and quickly implemented actions to improve the management of child protection procedures. The evidence you shared with the inspection team showed that in a short time these actions have ensured that any staff concerns about pupils' welfare are appropriately recorded. With the capable support of your new deputy headteacher, these systems have been rapidly communicated with staff and are being developed further.

You are the designated safeguarding lead officer and have undertaken appropriate training. The new deputy headteacher is due to participate in this training in the near future and will then support you in the designated lead role. Rigorous procedures are in place to ensure that all staff have appropriate safeguarding training that reflects the most up-to-date statutory requirements. All staff, including non-teaching staff, receive child protection training. As a result of this training and of your own staff development, all staff understand how to identify signs of a wide range of possible symptoms of abuse and what action they should take when they have concerns. Both teachers and support staff we spoke with have a good knowledge and understanding of potential issues. They were able to explain the school's new systems and give examples of what they would do in the event of a concern. Staff said that they feel confident in their ability to identify risk and are very aware that the safety of pupils is everyone's responsibility.

St Andrew's is a school that values each individual and emphasises the importance of equality. Pupils talk about 'it not making a difference if skin colour or beliefs are different.' Pupils are emphatic that 'everyone is equal and we are all treated the same.' The half-termly focus on values, taught well through the personal, social, and health (PSH) education curriculum, is successful in complementing the creation of an environment in which pupils feel safe and comfortable with each other. Pupils learn how to 'live out' the school's values and demonstrate a very good understanding of how their words and actions show that they uphold these values in their day-to-day lives.

Pupils spoken with have a very clear understanding of personal safety and can talk about how the school makes sure that they are safe. They explained the safety procedures and the rigorous supervision in place. They also talk about the regular fire drills they practise, and the safety procedures that they follow around the school's large site with different areas zoned off for pupils to access. Pupils knowledgeably described the specific support for younger children and how the playground floor is clearly painted to show them the boundary point that younger children can play up to. Pupils can identify people they trust and can talk to if they have any worries. Even the youngest children are able to explain the reasons why they need to be able to seek out someone they trust, and identify whom they can turn to when they are anxious.

Governors have been proactive in securing the site, which has the added challenge of a public right of way through the school grounds. They have installed CCTV and arranged for additional supervision at all times. Detailed risk assessments are in place to ensure that any risk is minimised. You have consulted with the local authority and the relevant external agencies to look at ways to ensure that access to the site is closely monitored. As a result of both your and the governors' constant attentiveness and vigilance, pupils are kept safe.

In addition to feeling safe on the school site, pupils also know how to stay protected online. Pupils are able to explain comprehensively the actions they take to manage their own use of the internet. They know that they should not share their personal information and why this is important. Pupils also understand the implications of cyber-bullying, as well as physical and emotional bullying. They state that incidents of bullying are uncommon and dealt with quickly when they occur. Due to the extensive work the school does to teach pupils about keeping safe in a variety of situations, the pupils are very vigilant and attentive to being safe. As part of this you have really considered the vulnerability of some pupils. You have recruited a leader with expertise in autism spectrum disorder, and are investing in training a member of staff to provide counselling where necessary to support pupils' well-being.

First-aid training is methodical and currently up to date. The recording and monitoring of incidents have recently been reviewed and the details logged are now more precise. There is a comprehensive log of incidents, action taken, and any

necessary follow-up action. Consequently, parents know when their child has had an accident at school and what action has been taken. Teachers' information folders identify all medical needs within each class and also serve as a clear record of communication with parents. As a result of having a rigorous system in place, the needs of pupils with specific and sometimes complex medical requirements are properly communicated to all staff. Vigilant monitoring maintains the safety of these, and other vulnerable pupils.

You are aware of the connection between good attendance and effective safeguarding. You are currently ensuring that thorough monitoring systems are in place to rapidly pick up on instances of absence and lateness. This results in all cases being investigated thoroughly and referred to the appropriate agencies where necessary. Your own analysis and case studies show that bespoke support provides valuable provision, particularly for vulnerable families. Consequently, attendance is improving and is currently good.

Leaders have ensured that all policies that link to safeguarding have been reviewed and updated to reflect the very latest guidance and these are available on the website for parents to access. Additionally, the school has made sure that a wealth of information is given to parents to help them support their children to stay safe. For example, you have posted possible questions that parents can ask their children to ensure that they are safe online. They are also advised how to check their child's internet use. As a result, you are doing what you can to ensure that parents are well equipped to ensure their child's safety at home.

You have reviewed all safeguarding practices in the light of the most recent statutory guidance, and commissioned a local authority review against the same concerns that prompted this inspection. You have implemented new, detailed procedures to ensure more rigorous staff training. Better methods of gathering information and making referrals in the school, as well as improved processes for working with various external agencies, have been introduced. These systems meet statutory requirements; however, they have only recently been implemented, and continuous monitoring is required.

As part of the ongoing leadership review of safeguarding procedures, there has been more clarity and reinforcement of the staff's specific responsibilities. This is particularly related to their roles in referring and recording concerns about pupils' well-being. Staff are now maintaining more rigorous records of their concerns and of any communication involving pupils' welfare. You ensured that staff received up-to-date staff training at the start of the school year. As a result, staff are clearly aware of their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding. Again, the procedures are new to the school and will need close scrutinising to secure their effectiveness.

Members of the governing body visit the school frequently and they are all aware of their statutory responsibilities. However, they have not ensured that their monitoring of processes to protect pupils has been sufficiently detailed and rigorous.

They have identified the need to sharpen up on their monitoring practice. Working with you and the deputy headteacher, governors are focusing on this to ensure that it is scrupulous in safeguarding all pupils.

External support

You and the deputy headteacher have taken full advantage of local authority support. Leaders, including governors, have used the recent safeguarding review to inform the current plans to improve the systems and processes in place. The local authority identifies and agrees that increasing the level of support will offer the school the bespoke expertise it requires to ensure that all safeguarding systems are monitored and are effective in continuing to keep pupils as safe as possible.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that new procedures for child protection are embedded fully and used effectively by:
 - holding all staff rigorously to account for implementing the new child protection systems
 - making sure that all concerns are logged, recorded and followed up meticulously
 - working more closely to consult with external agencies to protect vulnerable pupils
 - sharpening the governing body's systems and procedures for monitoring and evaluating the new child protection strategies, so that governors can challenge and support leaders more effectively over the safeguarding of pupils at the school.
- Ensure that referrals are made in an appropriate and timely manner.

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

Yours sincerely

Tracy Fielding

Her Majesty's Inspector