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15 June 2017

Mrs Margaret Sullivan
Headteacher
Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School
Manchester Drive
Leigh-on-Sea
Essex
SS9 3HS

Dear Mrs Sullivan

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 25 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

I scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. I also looked carefully at the local authority's action plan. I met with you, the designated safeguarding lead, the chair of the governing body, the safeguarding governor and another member of the governing body, the bursar, a representative of the local authority and one of the learning support staff. I also talked to 12 pupils in a meeting and other pupils informally in classrooms and when I visited the playground. I talked to members of staff as I toured the school with you and when I looked around parts of the school alone.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

Context

Our Lady of Lourdes is much larger than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much lower than average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language is lower than average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than average.

The governing body is currently exploring the options for conversion to academy status.

Inspection findings

You, along with governors and the local authority, recognise that safeguarding arrangements were not robust at the time of the previous inspection. You and other leaders in the school have acted decisively to rectify this situation. At the time of the previous inspection, the arrangements for recording and reviewing concerns about the welfare and safety of pupils were not secure. The designated lead for safeguarding has developed a much more systematic approach to this important work. You have raised the profile of safeguarding matters in the school. Staff are very clear about how to follow up any concerns, no matter how minor. They use the helpful internal referral forms, which are displayed prominently in all classrooms and in other areas of the building. The designated lead regularly and diligently reviews these internal referrals and, when necessary, takes appropriate action. She makes good use of the local authority safeguarding team to discuss concerns in order to reach decisions about what best to do next. The number of internal referrals has risen since the previous inspection because staff awareness has improved and because the culture of safeguarding has developed. All of the staff, leaders and governors that I talked to during the inspection were clear that they need to be vigilant to these matters. All staff have regular and effective training in how to identify possible signs of abuse or neglect and how to take concerns forward appropriately.

Most staff have also had training in the 'Prevent' duty. They understand the dangers of radicalisation but were less clear about how the 'Prevent' duty relates to their work, particularly with younger pupils. There is more work to be done to ensure that all staff are fully trained to understand how to identify possible signs of radicalisation and extremism in the school community and how to act on any concerns they might have.

The robust procedures for checking that adults in the school are suitable to work with children have been maintained. The member of staff responsible for this aspect of work is well informed and vigilant. She ensures that the central record of these checks is fully up to date. However, you recognise that you need to do more to follow up references for new members of staff that do not include important information about whether there were any previous safeguarding concerns.

Governors ensure that they check the work of the school and hold leaders to account. They too have raised the profile of safeguarding in governing body meetings. The governor who takes the lead on safeguarding regularly scrutinises the central record to ensure that pre-employment checks are made and recorded. He also reviews a sample of child protection cases to ensure that appropriate action has been taken to keep pupils safe. Governors recognise that pupils' use of the internet presents some risks. They have ensured that the school teaches pupils about online safety. Governors have monitored the planned actions to improve the school's safeguarding arrangements and child protection processes. They have worked with the diocese, the local authority and the headteacher of a local school to ensure that systems are more robust.

Pupils say they feel safe at school. The anti-bullying committee, made up of pupil representatives, understand their role in helping to deal with bullying. They say they do not have to work hard on this because bullying is very rare. Almost all of the pupils I spoke to have a good understanding of how to keep safe when using the internet. They know that they should not share personal information, including the name of their school. However, a small proportion of pupils did not recognise all of the risks associated with accepting unknown 'friends' when playing games online. Pupils are confident and polite when talking to adults and to each other. They are very proud of their school and describe it as welcoming and friendly.

External support

You have drawn on effective support from the local authority, outlined in the local authority action plan. You have also worked with a diocesan representative and the headteacher of a local school to improve your safeguarding arrangements. This support has been helpful in making the necessary improvements.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that all staff have up-to-date training on the 'Prevent' duty and understand how this relates to their roles and responsibilities in the school.
- Ensure that all pre-employment checks elicit safeguarding information from previous employers and referees.
- Ensure that all pupils are fully aware of the risks associated with playing games online.

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

Yours sincerely

Michelle Winter
Her Majesty's Inspector