

7 November 2017

Safeguarding at Wayland Academy Norfolk is “effective” - Ofsted

Dear Parents,

Following on from my letter to you during half-term, which explained the context of the Warning Notice from the Regional Schools Commissioner from July, I can now give you an important and encouraging update on the Academy’s progress.

Just before half-term we received an Ofsted Monitoring Inspection, looking specifically at the progress we have made on Safeguarding and on improving attendance. These were two areas on which we were ‘marked down’ during our full inspection in April, so this latest visit had particular importance for us.

As you are hopefully very aware by now, since the summer term we have been working very hard on pupil welfare, behaviour and development. The steps we have taken have included:

- Implementing a range of measures to make sure that all pupils feel safe and supported, from our new PALS (Pupils Advising, Listening and Supporting) which sees trained pupils supporting their peers, making it easier for pupils and parents to report any concerns about bullying or inappropriate behaviour.
- Introducing weekly welfare days, working with outside organisations, to help develop students’ understanding of safeguarding, diversity and inclusion issues.
- Renewing our focus on attendance through a dedicated attendance officer and improved procedures for checking and following-up on non-attendance.

Thanks to this “decisive action” over the last 6 months, the HMI who conducted this monitoring inspection concluded that Safeguarding at Wayland Academy Norfolk is now “effective”. It was found that our pupils “feel much safer at school... [and] ... pupils work and play in a secure and safe environment.” I am including a copy of the Inspector’s letter for your reference.

Our job now is to continue to build on this progress, to keep improving in all areas, as we work together to make sure that all of our pupils attend, achieve and progress.

As ever, if you have any questions related to this letter, or any other aspect of your child’s education at Wayland Academy Norfolk, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Glen Allott
Principal

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6 November 2017

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Dear Mr Allott

No formal designation inspection of Wayland Academy Norfolk

Following my visit to your school on 18 October 2017, 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 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 and met with you, the assistant principal, a group of pupils, the governor responsible for safeguarding, the chief executive officer of the TEN Group sponsored Norfolk Academies multi-academy trust (MAT), to which the school belongs, and a number of staff and leaders responsible for different aspects of safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

In addition, I visited 11 lessons, toured the school site during breaktime and scrutinised the school development plan and audits of safeguarding carried out by the MAT and external agencies.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

Context

Currently there are 563 pupils on roll. Most pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils that are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is above average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above average. At the last inspection in April 2017, the arrangements for safeguarding were judged not to be effective. Since the last inspection in April 2017, a member of staff responsible for attendance has been appointed. The senior leadership team has been restructured.

Since the previous inspection, school leaders supported by the MAT have taken decisive action to strengthen safeguarding. They have rightly concentrated on ensuring that pupils are kept safe from bullying, that they understand the different types of abuse such as radicalisation, and that attendance improves.

You have led a restructuring of leadership and established a safeguarding team. Consequently, all pupils and staff are clear about who is responsible for safeguarding. Parents and pupils understand whom they need to report to if they have any concerns. It is evident from speaking to pupils and the audits of safeguarding that pupils feel much safer at school than at the time of the last inspection.

There is a much stronger climate for safeguarding than at the time of the last inspection. Issues such as bullying have a much higher profile. For example, pupils have been provided with a number of means to report bullying. There is a dedicated link on the school website, a text number to contact or they can meet staff face to face. Pupils spoken to are confident that if they report that they are being bullied, it will be dealt with appropriately. Staff are managing cases where pupils have reported bullying much better than at the time of the last inspection. One positive difference is the daily checks on pupils' well-being that are carried out on victims of bullying.

The use of abusive homophobic language has reduced considerably, with only four incidents recorded since the previous inspection. Pupils spoken to have developed an awareness of why it is not appropriate to use this language through the weekly welfare days where different safeguarding themes are discussed and taught, and events such as 'Diversity Week' in July. The Pupils Advising, Listening and Supporting (PALS) initiative, which gives trained pupils the opportunity to support others if they have concerns, is starting to have a positive impact on safeguarding.

Visits to lessons and breaktime showed that pupils work and play in a secure and safe environment. In nearly all the lessons I chose to visit, the pupils were working hard and no evidence of disruption was witnessed. The tour of breaktime showed

that all pupils interacted in a relaxed and friendly manner. Again, no evidence of misbehaviour was witnessed. Supervision was proportionate and appropriate.

The school's information indicates that attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now broadly average. The employment of a dedicated attendance officer, coupled with the strengthening of attendance checks and procedures, have been instrumental to this improvement. The rate of persistent absence overall has reduced, but it still remains too high for disadvantaged pupils where the drop in the rate of persistent absence has been much smaller.

External support

Officers from the MAT, with governors, have carried out effective audits to check that aspects of safeguarding are strengthening and have challenged leaders to ensure improvement. The school has sensibly commissioned outside agencies to enhance the curriculum, such as by developing pupils' understanding of female genital mutilation, homophobic abusive language and radicalisation. It has also commissioned external agencies to give independent audits of safeguarding, which have guided school leaders on the steps they need to take to further improve.

Priorities for further improvement

- Reduce the persistent absence rates of disadvantaged pupils by carrying out a detailed analysis of the barriers to their attendance so that measures can be taken to overcome them.

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

Yours sincerely

Tim Bristow
Her Majesty's Inspector