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Ms Zoe Judge and Ms Jo Davey
Fortismere School
Southwing
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London
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Dear Ms Judge and Ms Davey

No formal designation inspection of Fortismere School

Following my visit with Sue Vale, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 14 December 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

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. Inspectors met with the co-headteachers, the school's designated safeguarding lead person and the deputies, the chair of the governing body, the governor with specific responsibility for safeguarding and the local authority adviser.

Inspectors held discussions with pupils from all key stages, including pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, previously excluded pupils and pupil leaders. Inspectors listened to their views about how safe they feel and discussed how the school helps them to stay safe.

Inspectors undertook a tour of the site to evaluate the safety and security of the premises. Inspectors met with the attendance officer, leaders with oversight of the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and a group of teaching and support staff. Inspectors made brief visits to classes and a tutor-time session to observe pupils' behaviour.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

Context

Fortismere School is a larger-than-average secondary school. The school is a national teaching school and a member of the New River Teaching School Alliance. Fortismere is a Stonewall School Champion for its work in celebrating diversity.

The school has 1,774 pupils on roll, including 450 students in the sixth form. The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is lower than the average for secondary schools. However, the proportion of pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan is higher than the national average.

The school is currently led by two co-headteachers, the previous headteacher having left at the end of the summer term 2017. The interim arrangements involve a number of acting posts in the senior leadership team. Governors have commenced the process for recruiting a permanent headteacher. There have also been changes in the leadership of inclusion, including the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.

Inspection findings

The safeguarding policy meets requirements. School leaders are knowledgeable about the latest safeguarding requirements and about the potential risks to their pupils. They identify the individual needs of pupils who may be at risk and develop effective partnerships within school and with the local authority, pan-London organisations and local and national charities to provide the best possible support. The new online reporting system is having a significantly positive impact. Staff like the new system and say that they have been well trained to use it effectively. Leaders are confident that all concerns are reported, and records show that they respond in a timely way. Staff know the triggers for reporting and why it is important. Staff training is effective. Pupils are confident that there are adults they can talk to if they have concerns.

The single central record of staff vetting checks meets requirements. However, systems are not as joined up or as smooth-running as they should be. Leaders have taken action to improve the lines of accountability, but agree that there is more to do to streamline the process. Leaders and governors are trained in safer recruitment and put this training into practice effectively throughout the recruitment process.

Support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is effective. Pupils' needs are identified, and bespoke classroom support for individual pupils is planned and delivered. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively. At present, the behaviour policy does not include information for staff about supporting this group of pupils successfully with their behaviour. However, some strong practice was observed, and

pupils' needs are now taken into account more often when sanctions for behaviour incidents are being considered. However, the headteachers agree that this needs to be formalised in the policy to iron out inconsistencies. The leadership of attendance, including for this group of pupils, is effective.

Pupils say that they feel safe and can explain how the school helps them to learn to manage risks and keep themselves safe. They are confident and knowledgeable young people, proud of their school and yet evaluative and critical of it at the same time. Their voice is powerful, and leaders' track record of listening to pupils' views and responding and taking action is strong. The impact of pupils' voice on school matters, including safeguarding issues, is exceptional. For example, sixth-form students led focus group discussions on 'student well-being and keeping safe' with all year groups to get feedback and draw up recommendations. As a result, pupils had a direct input into the content of the updated anti-bullying policy and an additional timetabled session in tutor groups to promote the relaunch. Pupils feel safe from bullying and are confident that adults always deal with it swiftly. Sixth-form students also organised an equalities evening, which is reflective of the strong positive culture of the school to further promote, support and celebrate diversity.

Pupils have also had an input into reviews of the school's behaviour policy. They like the new system, it is clear to them and they say that it is applied consistently. Pupils behave well in classes and around the school. The number of fixed-term exclusions has fallen compared with the same period last year.

School leaders are effective in ensuring that safeguarding and child protection arrangements keep pupils safe. The co-headteachers have a perceptive grasp of the strengths of their safeguarding practice and which aspects need further work. The interim senior leadership group works effectively as a team, and staff say that they feel well supported. Governors have planned the transition arrangements, pending a permanent headteacher appointment, with thought and care. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities for safeguarding.

External support

The school has a strong partnership with Haringey local authority and has worked effectively with it on a range of safeguarding matters. In the spring term 2017, the school was audited for safeguarding by the local authority and a number of recommendations were made. A follow-up visit took place in the summer term to report on the progress and impact of actions taken. Many have been implemented and others are planned.

Priorities for further improvement

- Bring the behaviour policy up to date so that it reflects the range of strategies and adjustments in place to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.

- Continue the review of how the single central record is managed, to streamline the process and make it easier for leaders and governors to fulfil their statutory responsibilities. Consider the role and oversight of administrative teams within the school and the link with Haringey local authority when reviewing these arrangements.

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

Yours sincerely

Janet Hallett
Her Majesty's Inspector