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16 January 2015

Mr Peter Whittle
Principal
Langdon Academy
Sussex Road
East Ham
London
E6 2PS

Dear Mr Whittle

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Langdon Academy

Following my visit with Lynne Kaufmann, Additional Inspector, and Nouredin Khassal, Additional Inspector, to your school on 13 and 14 January 2015, 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 the Chief Inspector was concerned about safeguarding arrangements and aspects of the quality of leadership at the academy.

Evidence

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements and met with the Principal and other senior and middle leaders; a few teachers, mostly with long services; and the Chair of the Governing Body and one other governor. Inspectors also met with several groups of pupils and parents, both formally and informally. Telephone conversations were held with a parent and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Inspectors observed the academy's work and made very short visits to 18 lessons and three registrations.

A range of documents was analysed and included the exclusion and attendance records, the academy's self-evaluation and improvement plan, and case studies on behaviour management. Policies on behaviour, safeguarding, child protection, special educational needs, risk assessments, whistleblowing and equality of

opportunity. The codes of conduct for both staff and pupils were scrutinised. Two letters and three complaints from parents were also taken into consideration.

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

The academy's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

Context

Langdon, an all-through academy, with 2030 pupils on roll from aged four to 16, is much larger than similar schools nationally. The academy has more boys than girls and the vast majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The largest groups are from Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Indian and African heritages.

The primary phase opened in 2011, and as a three form entry, it currently has 360 pupils on roll from Reception through to Year 3. It is expected to have all year groups by 2017. The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, the additional funding to support looked after children and children of service families is well above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average. In comparison, the proportion of disabled pupils and those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average. The academy has a specialist unit for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder which it manages for the local education authority.

A number of important changes have taken place since the last inspection in November 2013. Following the inspection and consultation about the school becoming an academy sponsored by Brampton Manor Trust, the school opened as a new academy on 1 January 2014. The Principal was appointed to the permanent post in April 2014 and is the sixth appointee in two years. The secondary head of school, an external appointee, took up the substantive post in September 2014. The acting head of the primary phase, appointed internally started the new post in January 2015. Both report directly to the Principal. Staffing is stable and all key staff are in place. The Executive Principal of Brampton Manor Academy leads an outstanding school and maintains a strategic and supervisory role of the academy.

Inspectors were aware during this inspection that the local authority had commissioned three investigations into allegations about practices in the previous school concerned with safeguarding arrangements. The National College for Teaching and Leadership is currently involved in the investigation. Whilst Ofsted does not have the power to investigate the previous allegations, actions taken by the setting in response to the incidents were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements.

The Principal, well supported by senior and middle leaders, has within a short time taken decisive actions to safeguard the well-being of pupils. This has been possible because of the priority given to introducing and developing new behaviour and safeguarding policies and procedures. All staff, governors, parents and pupils spoken to agree that the Principal is forging a new culture in the academy and they understand the vision for improvement. They all confirmed that pupils behave well and good systems are used to keep them safe. The strong support from the governing body and Brampton Manor Trust is central to the improvements.

Initial and basic changes were made as a means of ensuring pupils' safety. Changes included: securing good behaviour; re-writing all safeguarding policies with clear procedures and reporting lines; reinforcing a corporate identity; and using effective systems to monitor behaviour, attendance and achievement. As a result, the single central records are detailed and checks are carried out diligently. A slight slippage, linked to recording names in separate documents, was identified during the inspection and quickly corrected. While policies are robust and meet statutory requirements, information is not well integrated or referenced across linked policies. For example, different types of abuse are highlighted in safeguarding training but not in the child protection policy.

Effective systems are used for recording and reporting behaviour incidents. A new electronic system, introduced in the autumn term 2014, provides staff with a range of information on behaviour and awards. There is, however, unevenness in using the information. Whereas the primary phase reviews the data and uses findings to plan next steps, the secondary phase has yet to exploit the information in relation to different groups of pupils. Discussion among senior leaders about its use and the full impact of the new system on behaviour are not known. Equally, although the academy upholds the Equality Act 2010, attention is not given to analysing data rigorously and linking findings to the characteristics of all pupils when considering their attendance, punctuality and achievement.

Senior and middle leaders with responsibility for safeguarding ensure that all staff know the local and national priorities on safeguarding and keeping pupils safe. Staff have kept abreast of changes because training is kept under review. Senior leaders have embraced key priorities through training and seek to cascade the benefits widely to the staff. As a result, they are vigilant. They ensure that policies such as e-safety, the curriculum, including pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and enrichment activities take into consideration issues on extremism, different life styles and living in a democratic country. During the inspection, short visits to Year 9 form periods involved pupils debating world religions and recent events in France. Inspection evidence indicates, however, that the Year 7 personal education programme is not yet covering wider topics on, for example, extremism.

Staff spoken to are very positive about the quality of leadership and management; they are of the opinion that morale is much improved. They praise the straightforward approach of the Principal in leading and directing them and transforming the academy, in particular behaviour. They now feel there is 'a

common purpose' and that leaders are 'taking staff with them in the right direction'. Staff report that they feel valued. While they were not all consulted about policies, they value the increased level of accountability and the opportunities to influence the direction of the academy through approaching senior leaders to express their views. However, senior leaders have not begun to survey the views of staff and pupils regularly. This work is undeveloped.

Much work has been done to develop the special needs department which is managed by a senior member of staff team, with a link governor. Senior leaders have ensured greater access to resources and courses to ensure equality of opportunities for all pupils. As a result, expectations of work and behaviour are higher. However, monitoring of learning support staff, sharing of good practice across the phases and current thinking on education and health plans have not been formalised. There is not enough clarity for staff, in particular new staff, about the policy and action they can take when pupils raise concerns. Plans to address these shortcomings were identified during the inspection.

Allegations from complainants raised serious concerns about the quality of care when handling and speaking to pupils with specific learning needs. School leaders have dealt decisively with the concerns raised by involving the appropriate authority, in this instance the LADO. Nevertheless, although good advice is always given, and senior leaders cooperate well, responses from the LADO are not timely and there is too much delay in carrying out investigations to ensure speedy resolutions. Despite continuous communication, a case referred to the safeguarding unit in autumn term 2014 has still to be reviewed. Consequently, senior leaders took reasonable and strategic action to strengthen the special needs department through better deployment of senior specialist staff, resources and more time. Supervision, monitoring and training were intensified to ensure the protection of pupils. Inspection evidence does not support the views and concerns expressed by complainants.

Parents and/or carers with children with a specific learning need report that they are very well supported to achieve well and communication with staff is good on a day-to-day basis. However, communication with parents is not always timely. The very few complaints indicate that parents value good communication on all safeguarding and educational matters.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and as the pupils move around the large site confirms their positive comments about learning. Pupils who met and spoke with inspectors were mostly positive about their experiences when excluded and/or had low rates of attendance. They say exclusions lead them being reflective about their behaviour and could, as a result, highlight changes. However, pupils also say that the 'internal exclusion room' is sometimes unhelpful; questions about work and behaviour needs are not consistently addressed before they return to lessons. Inspectors agree with pupils' views. Pupils know the procedures for unacceptable behaviour and the consequences. They have adjusted well to the new culture in the academy, and know the consequences that it is not worth flouting the rules and the policies in

relation to, for example, wearing the full uniform and using a mobile phone in the academy. They find the rules difficult, but recognise that they are more focused in lessons. Their main concern is about the inconsistent use and application of the tracking system to monitor their behaviour and not having a voice – pupils spoken to were unaware of the school council. Exclusions, when compared to a similar period last year have fallen by 43% across the academy.

Good attention to securing pupils' safety ensures that pupils feel safe. Changes such as the high visibility of staff throughout the day, from when pupils arrive and leave at the end of the school day, reassure them that their well-being is paramount. Pupils value the work of the learning support officers and say they can confide in them. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average, and improving. It is, at times, lower in the primary phase because of common illness and pupils' participation in religious festivals.

The newly constituted governing body includes members from education and the world of business. Under the leadership of an experienced Chair, they ensure that matters related to safeguarding pupils' well-being are a standing item on the agenda. They ask questions and hold senior and middle leaders to account by requesting more detailed information on groups of pupils, for example, in relation to rates of attendance. They are well trained and equipped to enforce safeguarding matters in line with requirements.

External support

The Executive Principal of Brampton Manor Trust is highly effective in supporting the academy. The provision of resources, including time, senior teachers and resources have been contributing factors in helping the academy to move forward quickly with developing safeguarding procedures. For example, the work undertaken by the leading special needs coordinator contributed to transforming the special educational needs department at the academy. Similarly, the perceptive and practical work of senior staff from Brampton contributed to the staff quickly developing and implementing good behaviour management systems to improve attitudes and learning. The academy has adapted and made good use of Brampton's policies and procedures to instigate change.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that parents are always kept well informed about their child's well-being by providing them with timely responses and information.
- Increase the voice of pupils, parents and staff so that their views are clearly communicated and used to inform practice.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Education, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Newham and the Academies

Advisers Unit at the Department for Education. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Carmen Rodney
Her Majesty's Inspector