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4 February 2015

Mr Paul Lord
Headteacher
Heaton Park Primary School
Cuckoo Lane
Whitefield
Manchester
M45 6TE

Dear Mr Lord

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Heaton Park Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 3 February 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and the time you took to discuss behaviour in your school.

The inspection was a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with the no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

The inspection was carried out in response to two complaints made to Ofsted which raised serious concerns. The complaints were deemed to be qualifying complaints and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector decided that an unannounced inspection of the school should take place to follow up the whole-school issues that were raised. I sought to establish whether:

- safeguarding procedures are adequate, including the school's response to pupils presenting challenging behaviour
- suitable adjustments are made to behaviour management procedures according to the pupils' special educational needs and disabilities
- staff are suitably trained and able to seek advice and support when required
- leaders and the governing body are effective in monitoring and evaluating policy and practice for behaviour management and safeguarding within the school.

Evidence

I considered a range of evidence including:

- observations of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in lessons
- observations of pupils' behaviour throughout the day, including discussions with pupils
- results from a survey of pupils in Year 6 about behaviour and safety
- a discussion with a small group of pupils
- documentary evidence:
 - records of accidents
 - records of behaviour incidents
 - teachers' plans to teach pupils about safety and safeguarding
 - the local authority review into behaviour and safety
 - the views of 121 parents in a recent survey
 - the views of 39 members of staff in a recent survey
- discussion with the Chair of the Governing Body
- discussion with two representatives of the local authority
- discussions with school leaders and staff.

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

Leaders and managers have not taken effective action to maintain the good standards of behaviour and attitudes identified at the school's previous inspection.

Context

There are over 380 pupils at the school which makes Heaton Park larger than the average-sized primary school. Over 40% of pupils have a minority ethnic heritage and a similar proportion of pupils are known to be in circumstances that make them disadvantaged (for example, are known to be eligible for free school meals). Approximately a third of pupils do not speak English as their first language.

The proportion of pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs is more than twice the national average. There is a high level of mobility in the school which means that a larger than average proportion of pupils arrive or leave part-way through their primary education.

At the time of the inspection the deputy headteacher was absent on long-term sick leave.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

There are few recorded incidents of bullying and racism. However, the pupils that completed the survey, and some of the pupils I spoke to, confirmed there is name-calling in the school such as the use of racist and homophobic words and derogatory phrases relating to someone's appearance. It was particularly concerning for example, for almost half of pupils in Year 6 to disclose that most days they hear phrases such as 'that's so gay' to mean something unpleasant. In contrast, pupils confirmed that they rarely heard any derogatory language based on a pupil's faith or belief, special educational needs or disability.

There is a significant difference between the school's records and the views of pupils. For instance, despite the high frequency of derogatory language identified by pupils in one year group, there were only two recorded racist incidents for the whole school since the previous inspection and no recorded instances of homophobic language being used. This difference, in part, is because leaders and staff do not ask pupils the right questions frequently enough to find out what sort of language pupils hear and use around school. Leaders do not know if the difference is because staff do not hear or report the language or whether pupils are only using the language outside the earshot of staff. Because leaders do not know enough about the prevalence of all types of derogatory language around the school they have not been able to take effective action to tackle it.

The school has two separate mis-matched policies for behaviour and bullying, which has hindered leaders' ability to tackle all types of poor behaviour. A racist slur for example is identified and recorded as a serious incident in the behaviour policy but there is no mention of homophobic slurs or those relating to a pupils' appearance (for example taunting someone for having ginger hair or liking a particular video game). Any one-off slurs would also not fit into the school's definition of bullying and therefore could be missed by staff. The school's systems and policies do not include all types of derogatory language and all protected groups as identified in the Equality Act. There is no mention, for example, of pupils who are or may become transgender in any policy or procedure and there is scant mention of pupils with a disability.

I spoke to lunchtime staff, the school crossing patrol, canteen staff and teaching assistants who all confirmed that pupils' are polite, friendly, and use good manners when they speak with adults. Around school and at break time, pupils appeared to play cordially with others. They were friendly and cooperative. They responded quickly and without fuss to adults' requests, for example, to line up or to stop playing their games. Adults modelled good behaviour well and respect in their discussions with each other and with children. I observed, across the school, pupils' from different countries, faiths and ethnic background cooperating and playing well together in class and around school.

Older pupils help to support younger pupils at break times and they commented that they are proud to set a good example to others to follow. Lunchtime staff confirmed that pupils fall out occasionally but most of the time, most pupils are well behaved

and respectful. Some pupils I spoke with mentioned that on occasion non-teaching staff 'brush us off and tell us to go away and play' when they mention someone is being unkind or using poor language. In the responses to the survey that pupils completed during the inspection, their views were mixed. Some said that behaviour around the school was good or better, some said there were elements of poor behaviour such as running down corridors, fighting, noise, pushing in line and name-calling.

Most parents who completed the school's own survey agreed that the school deals effectively with bullying and pupils are well behaved. In the staff survey however, only three quarters agreed that the school deals well with bullying and only just over half agreed that behaviour is dealt with consistently. There is a lack of helpful detail in the answers provided by parents and staff because leaders are not asking the questions they need to in order to get enough useful information to tackle all forms of poor behaviour.

In lessons there is a mix of behaviour. In my walk around the classes, many pupils were absorbed in their work, were cooperative with other pupils, listened well to adults, and were keen and responsive. However in some classes, pupils were off task and messing about with equipment, not listening to the teacher, swinging backwards on chairs, talking across the room, calling out, or quietly not doing any work. Around half of pupils in Year 6 said others called out in lessons when they were not supposed to and they could not get on with their work because of distractions and noise. The other half of pupils responded that behaviour is good and they could concentrate in lessons.

There are a number of pupils for whom good behaviour is a challenge. The school works well with other agencies to prevent further exclusions or breaks in their education. Parents and pupils occasionally think that some children are being treated differently to others. They are correct; they are sometimes treated differently because staff are effectively managing a few pupils' behaviour with specific personalised targets. Staff make sensible adjustments to behaviour management procedures according to pupils' needs and disabilities. However, staff occasionally excuse inappropriate conduct and language of pupils who are on behaviour programmes. It is also important that the school continues to make sure the behaviour of these pupils does not disturb the learning or safety of others in the school.

Supervision at play and lunch times is high. This means that adults are able to quickly identify and tackle any accident or unsafe situation. There are a few members of staff with relevant First Aid training and there is an adequate system of completing accident books and tending to pupils who feel unwell. Leaders do not systematically or routinely analyse information from accidents in order to take action to prevent future incidents. The school works well with other agencies to protect and safeguard children.

Attendance has risen well in the last three years and is currently above the national average. The number of pupils persistently absent has fallen significantly because of the good work the school has done in working with families and other agencies.

Most pupils feel safe in school but a few disagree. Pupils who completed the survey said they would like more help with how to stay safe from swearing and derogatory language, and how to stay safe from criminal offences out of school. Overwhelmingly pupils agree the school helps them stay safe from taking substances such as alcohol and drugs.

Staff are suitably trained. For example, some have been recently trained in how to use physical restraint with pupils. The school has invested resources into training lunchtime staff to make sure they know how to deal with pupils' behaviour.

Priorities for further improvement

- Tackle the use of derogatory language and name calling, particularly homophobic language and language that relates to pupils' appearance and ethnic origin..
- Tighten up systems of recording behaviour and bullying incidents to include all forms of derogatory language and take appropriate action in response to what this recording shows
- Frequently survey pupils' views about different types of behaviour, bullying and safety, analyse the answers, and take action as necessary to improve teachers' knowledge, understanding and practice.
- Make adjustments to the behaviour and bullying systems and policies to ensure all types of derogatory language and each of the protected characteristics in the 2010 Equality Act are included.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Bury, to the Secretary of State for Education and the Chair of the Governing Body. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Allan Torr
Her Majesty's Inspector