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16 November 2015

Mrs Anne-Marie Blewitt
Principal
Ivanhoe College Ashby-De-La-Zouch
North Street
Ashby-de-la-Zouch
Leicestershire
LE65 1HX

Dear Mrs Blewitt

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Ivanhoe College Ashby-De-La-Zouch

Following my visit to your academy on 3 November 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 Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and aspects of the effectiveness of leadership and management at the academy.

Evidence

During the inspection, I scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements and met with you and other senior leaders, members of the governing body and academy staff. I also spoke by telephone with a representative from the local authority. I met with groups of students in meetings and informally to discuss how the academy helps to keep them safe from harm. I observed students arriving at the academy in the morning and leaving at the end of the academy day, at break and lunchtime and as they moved between lessons. I also made brief visits to an assembly and a range of lessons. I scrutinised additional documentation, including records of staff training, the academy's bullying logs, attendance and exclusions information, and considered the academy's work to protect vulnerable students. I also considered the academy's surveys of the view of students, parents and carers and the 102 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, received in the last 365 days.

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

The academy's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

Context

The academy is of average size for a secondary school, with 918 students on roll. It is larger than average compared with other schools with students of similar age (Years 7 to 9). The great majority of students are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is average. The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is below average. The academy has an early years setting on site, Ivanhoe Under 5s, which is managed by the academy's governing body. Staffing at the academy is stable.

Main findings

Leaders, managers and staff at all levels work hard and effectively to ensure that students are safe. Policies relating to safeguarding fully meet requirements. Robust recruitment procedures ensure that all the necessary checks are made before staff are appointed to work at the academy. Checks made on staff who work at Ivanhoe Under 5s fully meet requirements, including those set out by statutory guidance on disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006.

The academy's policies and procedures relating to safeguarding are clear and well understood by staff and students. High quality, comprehensive and regular training ensures that teachers and other adults are very well informed about their responsibilities to keep students safe from harm. Academy leaders make sure that adults who join the academy at different times quickly receive safeguarding training. Staff work together extremely effectively to share and report concerns. They are tenacious in ensuring that any concerns they raise are followed up quickly and effectively. This includes any referrals made to local authority staff with responsibility for child protection. Recent training has strengthened teachers' understanding of how to protect students from extremism and radicalisation and the risks associated with female genital mutilation. Staff and students are very knowledgeable about the risks associated with the internet and robust policies are in place to ensure that staff and students stay safe online.

Leaders and managers regularly review the academy's approach to safeguarding to ensure that it remains effective and to identify where further improvements might be made. This includes through commissioning external reviews of the academy's work to keep students safe. Staff regularly survey different groups of students and parents and carers to check that students feel safe at the academy and respond to any concerns quickly and effectively. These surveys show high levels of satisfaction about the quality of the academy's work. For example, in a survey completed by 106 parents and carers at the Year 7 'Settling In' evening taken at the end of October this year, all parents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: 'My child is well looked after at this school' and all indicated that they would recommend the school

to another parent. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers also reported positively on the effectiveness of the school's work to protect students from bullying.

At the start of term, senior leaders undertook a full review of the academy's approach to preventing and tackling bullying. As a result, policies and practice have been strengthened further to ensure that all students are protected from bullying at all times. Regular checks on the well-being of the very small minority of students who report concerns about bullying are accompanied by timely and where necessary, regular, communication with their parents and carers. Clear action plans are put in place to ensure that worries are resolved quickly and these are informed by the views of the students concerned. During the inspection, students reported that bullying is rare and dealt with very effectively whenever it occurs. Nevertheless, the 102 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, indicate that a small minority of parents remain concerned about this aspect of the academy's work. While the inspection found incidents of bullying to be rare and the academy's approach to dealing with bullying to be effective, the results from Parent View indicate that not enough has been done to ensure that all parents are confident that leaders and managers tackle bullying as effectively as they do.

All groups of students interviewed reported high levels of satisfaction with the academy's work to keep them safe. Vulnerable students are cared for very effectively. Students particularly value the support provided by the student support team. Students say that they know that if ever they are worried, specialist staff are on hand to provide support and guidance and to take action quickly to address their concerns. The quality of care and support provided by Student Support staff is an extremely strong feature of the academy's work to keep students safe.

Year 7 students are highly complementary about the quality of transition arrangements which they say helps them feel very safe and welcome at the start of term. One, typifying the views of others, said 'everyone was really kind and welcoming'. They also reported how older students provided support in helping them find their way around the school at the start of the year and that the student house leaders are always on hand to provide help and guidance if they have any worries or concerns. These and other students also commented very positively on the high levels of staff supervision throughout the school day, including during lesson changeovers, at break and lunchtime and as they board their buses at the end of the school day. All students reported how the academy provides a welcoming environment for all, regardless of individual differences. Students I met who have special educational needs spoke very positively about the support they receive in the learning zone. Despite the academy's work to emphasise to students the importance of using positive and appropriate language, a few students reported that they occasionally hear others using derogatory language towards one another at break and lunchtimes.

The strong life skills curriculum ensures that students know how to stay safe. The curriculum provides comprehensive coverage of all potential risks to students' well-being and is regularly reviewed to ensure that it responds to emerging local and

national issues. For example, Year 8 and Year 9 students recently watched a theatre production, 'Chelsea's Choice', brokered through the district council, in response to prosecutions reported in the national media about child sexual exploitation. Students reported consistently how the production and the work in lessons which followed had strengthened their understanding of how to protect themselves from harm. The curriculum ensures that students' have a strong understanding of fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law and tolerance towards others.

All of the academy's safeguarding arrangements benefit from rigorous oversight by the governing body. Governors are extremely well informed about their legal duties and hold senior staff to account very robustly to ensure that students are safe. This includes through searching annual reviews of the academy's safeguarding policies and practices, led by the governor with specific responsibility for safeguarding.

External support

Academy leaders work very effectively with a range of external agencies to ensure that students are safe. This includes making good use of services provided by the local authority, for example through the local authority designated officer for child protection and the supporting Leicestershire's families service. Senior staff have also brokered support from the local authority's anti-bullying service to review and strengthen the academy's practice. This resulted in the academy receiving the local authority's 'beyond bullying' accreditation, in recognition of its effective policies and practice to protect students from bullying.

Priorities for further improvement

- Strengthen strategies to eliminate students' occasional use of derogatory language towards one another.
- Build parental confidence in the school's procedures to protect pupils from bullying by ensuring that all parents fully understand the school's approach to preventing and tackling bullying.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Leicestershire, 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

Daniel Burton

Her Majesty's Inspector