

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



8 January 2018

Ms Janis Davies
The Sydney Russell School
Parsloes Avenue
Dagenham
Essex
RM9 5QT

Dear Ms Davies

No formal designation inspection of The Sydney Russell School

Following my visit with Tim Williams, 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 in the school.

Evidence

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record of staff suitability checks and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. We met with the principal and senior leaders, including the designated safeguarding lead. We also met with the chair of the governing body, members of staff, and spoke on the telephone with a representative of the local authority's safeguarding team.

Inspectors visited lessons across a range of subjects and year groups and spoke with pupils from all year groups both formally and informally. We scrutinised records in relation to attendance, exclusions and the management of reported incidents of bullying. Inspectors reviewed governors' minutes, procedures relating to risk assessments and the handling of complaints. We considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and parent surveys conducted by the school.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

Context

Sydney Russell is a larger-than-average all-through school with 2,171 pupils on roll. In February 2015, the school converted to academy status, sponsored by the Partnership Learning Trust. The school is a national teaching school and runs a school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) programme in partnership with St Angela's Ursuline School in Newham.

A larger-than-average number of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. A third of pupils speak English as an additional language. Just under half of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils who have education, health and care plans is in line with the national average. The majority of these pupils receive support through the school's resourced provision for pupils who have autistic spectrum disorder.

Leaders and governors make certain that safeguarding and child protection measures are in place. Pupils' safety and protection from harm are a constant priority. Leaders ensure that staff recruitment and record-keeping comply with statutory guidance. Staff are trained regularly on the latest guidance relating to safeguarding, including the 'Prevent' duty. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding meet regularly and have robust systems in place to ensure that prompt referrals are made to external agencies. Records show that follow-up procedures are thorough and that pupils and families receive the appropriate support. The school undertakes appropriate risk assessments for trips and visits.

Governors understand their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. These include scrutinising the school's safeguarding processes and the appointment of a link governor with responsibility for safeguarding. Minutes of governors' meetings show that leaders regularly report safeguarding matters and that governors effectively hold leaders to account.

Pupils who spoke to inspectors were consistently positive about the school's focus on their safety and well-being. They know who to report to should they have any concerns, and recognise the different ways that the school offers support and guidance. Pupils are knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe. The tutor programme, workshops, assembly and personal, social, health and economics (PSHE) education curriculum cover topics such as internet safety, gang and knife crime, radicalisation and extremism.

Pupils report that bullying is rare. School records show that incidents of bullying are followed up promptly and that appropriate action is taken. Fixed-term exclusions are below the national average, and attendance for all groups of pupils is in line with, or in some instances higher than, national averages. Inspectors observed pupils moving between lessons and at break and lunchtimes. The school environment is orderly. However, some parts of the school have narrow corridors and at times there can be areas of congestion. Pupils reported to inspectors that these areas of congestion can lead to late arrival at lessons.

External support

School leaders work effectively with the local authority to prioritise pupils' safety and well-being.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that all areas of the school are free from congestion so that pupils are able to arrive on time to lessons.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Barking and Dagenham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Carolyn Dickinson
Her Majesty's Inspector