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Danny Carr
Principal
Dixons Allerton Academy
Rhodesway
Bradford
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Dear Mr Carr

No formal designation inspection of Dixons Allerton Academy

Following my visit with Kate Rowley, Senior Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 26 January 2022, 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 your school.

This inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for no formal designation (NFD) inspections. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about aspects of the quality of education for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the effectiveness of leadership and management and safeguarding and behaviour and attitudes of pupils.

We do not give graded judgements on NFD inspections. However, if we find some evidence that overall standards may be declining, but where no serious concerns have been identified, then the next inspection will normally be a section 5 inspection and will be brought forward. If we have serious concerns, we will deem the NFD inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

Evidence

We scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. We met with the principal and groups of pupils. We made telephone calls to parents, met with some members of the trust and the chief executive officer. We also met with staff. We held meetings with the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and the behaviour leads in the primary and secondary school. We

scrutinised minutes from governors' meetings and behaviour records. We reviewed documentation for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

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

Safeguarding is effective.

Context

There are 1936 pupils on roll at this all-through school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is higher than the national average, and there is a high proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The number of disadvantaged pupils is much higher than the national average. The number of pupils who require support for SEND is higher than the national average. 28 pupils have left the school roll this year. There have been some staffing changes since the previous inspection. There have also been several changes to the senior leadership team since the previous inspection, including the appointment of the principal in September 2021 and new assistant vice-principals.

Main Findings

Pupils at Dixons Allerton Academy with SEND are well known by the SENCo and her team. Leaders, including the SENCo, understand and are clear about the relationship between SEND, behaviour and safeguarding. This is woven through the work of the school as a 'golden thread'. There is a shared, comprehensive and ambitious view of how to support pupils in school. Staff are clear that it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that pupils with SEND have access to the same curriculum as their peers.

Leaders and staff know how to identify pupils with SEND. The SENCo acts quickly on information received from staff to ensure that pupils get the right support. There is regular training about SEND for staff and curriculum leaders. Staff say that they are confident when teaching pupils with SEND and that they work in collaboration with teaching assistants. SEND leaders and senior leaders carry out quality assurance to assure themselves that pupils with SEND are receiving the support they need. When the need for support extends beyond the expertise in the school, leaders work with Bradford local authority and other agencies, such as counselling support, to secure the additional support required.

Pupils who have SEND say that they are well supported with their work. Pupils in the primary phase can talk about how teachers explain things in different ways if they need it and how working in small groups really helps them. Well-thought-out adaptations ensure that in physical education lessons, pupils with physical disabilities are able to fully take part.

During this inspection, we considered how well leaders and staff safeguard pupils. The single central register of checks on adults who work with children is compliant with legal

requirements. All required checks have taken place and have been recorded. Leaders and staff understand the importance of these checks, and these systems are well understood by staff.

The designated safeguarding lead has strong oversight of safeguarding in the school. Responsibilities are clearly defined. Duties are delegated. This is to prevent anything from slipping through the net. Following the previous inspection, there are now clear protocols for information-sharing that are understood by staff.

When safeguarding incidents occur, leaders deal with these in a timely manner and records are kept. When referrals to external agencies are required, these happen appropriately, according to the needs of the pupil. Safeguarding training for staff happens on a regular basis. Staff are confident of what they need to do in a wide variety of situations. There is a clear understanding of the local risks that pupils may face. Staff know what to do and who to report to if they have a concern about another member of staff.

Pupils say that there are lots of staff that they can speak to if they have a problem. They are confident to do so. Pupils are taught about keeping themselves safe through the personal development curriculum. They are knowledgeable about online safety and local risks. However, when learning about protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act (2010) and relationships and sex education, a small number of secondary pupils say that their learning is disrupted by other pupils. This means that they do not always feel they are learning sufficiently well about topics such as sexual orientation or about sexual abuse and violence and how to recognise it and report it. A minority of pupils said that pupils at this school might not be treated respectfully by other pupils if they were openly in a same sex relationship. School leaders are clear that there is further work to do here and are beginning to take further action on this.

Inspectors also focused on pupils' behaviour and how well this is managed. Primary pupils have a very positive view of behaviour. Behaviour records show that pupils who have attended the primary have very few incidents of poor behaviour that results in suspension when they progress through the secondary school.

Pupils in both the primary and secondary school are very clear about the procedures that are in place to manage their behaviour and the systems for rewards. Pupils understand the different stages of sanctions. Pupils in primary say that the policy is applied fairly and consistently. Pupils in the secondary phase say that this is variable and often depends on the teacher. Secondary leaders are implementing coaching sessions and opportunities for staff to practise their behaviour management. It is too soon to see the impact of this on improving the consistency of application of the behaviour policy in the secondary school.

There has been a high number of suspensions in the secondary phase since pupils returned to school in September this year. The initial spike is now reducing. This is in part due to higher expectations for behaviour, particularly relating to pupils' punctuality to lessons. There are many steps in place to prevent pupils from being permanently

excluded. Permanent exclusion is used as a last resort, and only for serious incidents. Pupils spoken with who have had a suspension agree that they would prefer to be in school. During the inspection, there was a calm, industrious atmosphere in school.

Pupils in primary school say that bullying does not happen very often. They say that adults always intervene when there is an issue and help to resolve it. Primary pupils can report via an 'anti-bullying box' if they wish, but they say they are confident to approach an adult. Records for bullying in the primary school show that there are no repeat offences once bullying has been reported. In secondary, there are more incidents of bullying. Pupils say that adults will support them, but some feel that the bullying may sometimes reoccur. Leaders do have procedures for follow up checks when bullying has occurred but recognise the need for further review.

Staff say that they feel very well supported by senior leaders. Recent changes, such as a shorter response time when staff request 'on call' support for managing behaviour, are appreciated. Staff also say that leaders and managers are very considerate of their workloads.

Since the previous inspection, the trust has implemented protocols and systems for more careful analysis of pupils who leave the school roll. This has been fully adopted in the school. Leaders challenge parents and carers appropriately if they wish to educate their child at home. Of the 24 pupils who have moved off roll in September, there are clear records showing why the pupil has left and their destination.

Additional support

The school works with external partners, such as the local authority and counselling services, to broker training for staff and support for pupils. The school is well supported by the trust. There are no specific trust interventions taking place in the school at this time. Routine support, for example membership of groups, such as the 'cross cutting' groups, allows sharing of best practice and ideas across the trust.

Priorities for further improvement

- A small number of pupils say that they miss opportunities to learn in relationships and sex education lessons due to some pupils' silly behaviour. This means that they are sometimes missing out on vital learning about things such as sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and violence and how to report it. Leaders should ensure that the behaviour management policy is applied consistently and that staff are supported to manage behaviour when dealing with difficult or sensitive topics.
- A minority of pupils say that pupils who are in a same-sex relationships would struggle to be open about this in school. This is because some pupils are not accepting of all of the protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010. Leaders should continue their work in this area to ensure pupils understand modern British values and the protected characteristics.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, and the chief executive officer of the Dixons multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bradford. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Debbie Redshaw
Senior Her Majesty's Inspector