

OAKHILL SCHOOL AND NURSERY

Wiswell Lane, Whalley, Clitheroe, Lancashire, BB7 9AF

23 JUNE 2016

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Oakhill School and Nursery is an independent day school for girls and boys from the age of 0 to 16. It was founded in 1978, fulfilling the need for an independent Roman Catholic day secondary school in the Clitheroe area. A nursery was established in the early 1990s and the preparatory school opened in 2003. In 2007, Oakhill Academy, a sports hall and fitness suite, which was built for members of the local community but which also provides facilities and resources for the pupils, was opened. The school's proprietor is Oakhill College, Whalley Ltd, and there is an advisory governing body chaired by the chairman of the company. At the time of the visit, there were 271 pupils on roll (138 boys and 133 girls), of whom 123 were in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), 70 were in the preparatory school (Years 1 to 6), and 78 in the senior school (Years 7 to 11). The school has 50 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom five have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. No pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL). The school's previous inspection was an integrated inspection in January 2015.

PURPOSE OF THE VISIT

This was an unannounced emergency visit at the request of the Department for Education which was focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs) and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework, particularly those concerned with safeguarding; risk assessments; the suitability of staff; the manner in which complaints are handled; the provision of information and the quality of leadership and management.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 (a) and (b); EYFS regulations 3.4 to 3.8]; provision of information to parents [ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32 (1) (c)]

The school meets the requirements for providing information relating to safeguarding to parents. Particulars of the arrangements for safeguarding are published on the school's website. The school does not meet all of the Regulations and the EYFS requirements for safeguarding.

Safeguarding policy

The safeguarding policy made available to parents and inspectors via the school website before the start of this inspection visit was based on documentation which had been out of date for some time. It provided for training for staff to be updated every three years, rather than regularly as stipulated in the latest version of the government's safeguarding guidance, *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (July 2015). The guidance provided in the policy with regard to dealing with allegations against staff was not in keeping with the latest guidance. These

failings were rectified during the course of the inspection visit, and an updated policy is now available to parents through the school's website.

However, this updated policy for safeguarding does not yet provide suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school because: the policy does not provide contact details for the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and other members of the school's safeguarding team; some of the contact details for the Local Safeguarding Children Board and other agencies are either missing or incorrect; and the policy does not set out restrictions for the use of mobile phones and cameras in the early years setting as required by EYFS regulations. Guidance on the use of mobile phones and cameras is, however, provided as part of a separate policy on safer working practices, but this policy is not easily available for parents. In all other respects, the school's safeguarding policy provides clear guidance to staff on how to safeguard pupils at the school. The guidance provided is in line with the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and has regard to current government guidance.

Safeguarding implementation

Parents have not been kept up to date with changes to the school's safeguarding policy as the policy made available to them on the school's website up until the date of the inspection was due for review in March 2015. Between then and the time of the inspection visit, changes had been made to the policy, a new DSL took over leadership of safeguarding in March 2016, and a formal review of the school's safeguarding procedures took place in April 2016. The policy available to parents did not reflect any of these changes.

Although update training has been provided for staff, the school's records of who has received training are not maintained rigorously enough to provide conclusive evidence that all staff have received the required training. For example, staff were required to read the most recent update of Part 1 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (July 2015) and to sign a form to indicate that they had read and understood the guidance. Although the majority of staff had done so, a minority had not confirmed that their knowledge and understanding of this guidance was up to date. Staff are, however, generally familiar with the school's policy and procedures and, in practice, seek advice from the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) if they have any concerns with regard to the safeguarding of pupils. Training in safeguarding is provided for new members of staff, although the school's records of induction training do not provide a clear picture of exactly what training each new member of staff has received or who is ultimately responsible for ensuring that all staff have received and understood the necessary elements of the training.

The school's safeguarding policy outlines appropriate procedures for checking the suitability of staff to work with children before appointment, although it does not mention the need to check whether teachers have been prohibited from teaching or those with management responsibility have been barred from management. Although the school is aware of all of the required checks which need to be carried out before a member of staff is appointed, the procedures for ensuring these checks are carried out, the recording of such checks and the maintenance of staff records are not rigorous enough to ensure that every person appointed is suitable to work with children, as outlined in the section below. References have either not been obtained or retained for a small minority of staff before they start work.

A new DSL, who has an appropriate level of seniority within the school and has received relevant training for the role, was appointed in March 2016. She devotes sufficient time to the role and makes sure that she is available to staff and pupils throughout the week for advice and help whenever needed. She is supported in her role by a small team of staff, all of whom have received appropriate training for designated safeguarding leads and who

can deputise for her if necessary. One member of this team takes lead responsibility for safeguarding within the EYFS. Relevant safeguarding training is provided for all staff at the start of the school year. Staff are aware that anyone can make a referral to the local authorities should this be required. In practice, any concerns are referred in the first instance to the DSL, who ensures that they are acted upon promptly.

Recent training has been provided to update the understanding of staff members of how to help pupils keep safe when using electronic and social media. Pupils are taught about e-safety in their computing and information and communication technology (ICT) lessons and through the school's personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme. Effective measures have been taken to limit what pupils can access on their tablet computers when in school.

The DSL has undertaken a thorough audit of the school's procedures using guidelines produced by the Local Safeguarding Children Board, and this audit has been reviewed by the governing body. She liaises with the school's safeguarding governor on a regular basis so that governors are fully informed about any safeguarding issues. The governing body has ensured that the school's policy has been reviewed annually, as required, but did not ensure that the revised version was made available to parents.

A suitable code of conduct and whistleblowing procedures are provided, implemented and understood by staff. The school acts on and refers any early signs of abuse and neglect, and listens to the views of pupils. Staff are clear about the procedures to follow if they receive an allegation against a member of staff. The DSL keeps clear records of any safeguarding concerns, and these are kept securely. She liaises as necessary with outside agencies and with parents in relation to safeguarding concerns.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – risk assessments [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16; EYFS 3.64]

The school meets the Regulation and the EYFS requirements.

The school has taken suitable precautions for potentially vulnerable areas of the school site. Strict controls have been implemented for the on-site gym and fitness suite, which is accessed by members of the public during the day. Access by members of the public to other areas of the school is restricted by a secure entry system. There are always members of staff on duty in the external areas at break times. Pupils commented that they feel safe in school because of the secure entry system and the vigilance of staff.

The suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors and single central register of appointments [ISSRs Part 4, paragraphs 18, 19, 20 and 21; EYFS 3.9–3.18]

The school does not meet all of the Regulations and the EYFS requirements.

The large majority of staff are subject to the full range of required checks to ensure their suitability to work with children before commencing work at the school, but this is not necessarily the case for a small minority of staff. The school's single central register of appointments (SCR) and staff appointment files indicate that some of the checks have either not been carried out or have not been recorded. These omissions include evidence of checks on a member of staff's identity, their qualifications and their right to work in the UK. A few staff who undertake teaching activities have not been checked against the list of those who are prohibited from teaching, and references have not been obtained, followed up or recorded for a small number of staff.

The manner in which complaints are handled [ISSRs Part 7, paragraph 33; EYFS 3.74 to 3.75]

The school meets the Regulation and the EYFS requirements.

The school has a suitable policy for the handling of complaints and has followed the procedures set out therein for the very small number of formal complaints received. The policy sets out clear timescales for the management of complaints, allowing for them to be considered initially on an informal basis. For complaints that are not resolved in this way, a formal procedure is established for the complaint to be made in writing. If a parent is not satisfied with a response to the formal complaint, there is provision for a hearing before a panel of three people who have not been directly involved, one of whom is independent of the management of the school. The policy provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations and for a written record to be kept of all formal complaints. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are kept confidential.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSRs Part 8, paragraph 34]

The school does not meet the Regulation.

Although those with leadership and management responsibilities have sufficient knowledge and understanding of independent school standards, the proprietor has not ensured that they fulfil their responsibilities to meet these standards in all respects. This is largely because the maintenance of records and the systems for monitoring certain aspects of the school's provision are not rigorous enough. For example, the school has established procedures for recording which members of staff have received updated safeguarding training and which have read and understood the latest guidance on safeguarding. However, these records are not checked to identify where there have been omissions in training and to rectify these omissions. The school's leadership is fully aware of the checks which need to be carried out before a member of staff is appointed, but does not check rigorously enough to ensure that such checks are being carried out and recorded systematically.

REGULATORY ACTION POINTS

The school does not meet all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 (a) and (b); EYFS regulation 3.4]

- Improve the wording and implementation of the safeguarding policy as follows:
 - provide contact details of the designated safeguarding lead and other members of the school's safeguarding team;
 - provide up-to-date contact details for the Local Safeguarding Children Board and other agencies;
 - include guidance on the use of mobile phones and cameras in the early years setting.
- Ensure that all staff receive updated safeguarding training and that all have read and understood the most recent update of Part 1 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.
- Ensure that all new members of staff receive thorough induction training, especially with regard to the school's safeguarding policy and procedures.

- Ensure that suitable references are obtained for every member of staff before they commence work at the school.

The suitability of staff and single central register of appointments [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18 (2)(b) and (c)(i)(iii)(iv), 18(3), 21 (3)(a)(i), (iv) and (vii), (3)(b)]

- Ensure that all of the checks to establish a person's suitability to work with children are carried out before a member of staff is appointed and that the date on which such checks are carried out is recorded accurately on the single central register of appointments.
- Rectify any previous failures to carry out and/or record the following checks:
 - identity checks
 - qualifications
 - right to work in the UK
 - prohibition from teaching
- Ensure that staff files contain suitable evidence of the checks undertaken and copies of required documentation.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSRs Part 8, paragraph 34(1)(b)]

- Monitor the implementation of the school's policies and procedures more rigorously, paying particular attention to the following:
 - maintaining an accurate record of the induction training provided for new staff and monitoring this record to ensure that all staff have received all necessary training, especially safeguarding training;
 - maintaining an accurate record of which staff have attended updated safeguarding training and following up on any who have missed the training;
 - ensuring that all staff have read and understood the latest version of Part 1 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.
- Ensure that all of the required checks have been carried out before a new member of staff is appointed, that all such checks are recorded accurately on the single central register of appointments and that staff recruitment files contain all required copies of documentation and references.