

ASHTON HOUSE SCHOOL

50-52 Eversley Crescent, Isleworth, Middlesex, TW7 4LW

26TH SEPTEMBER 2016

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Ashton House School is a co-educational day school for pupils between the ages of three to eleven. It is located to the southwest of London within the borough of Hounslow. The school is owned by a partnership, represented by a principal, which is responsible for the governance. At the time of the visit, there were 127 pupils on roll. Of these, 29 were in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The school has identified 13 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) of whom 10 receive specialist support for their learning. There are no pupils with statements of special educational needs or education, health and care (EHC) plans. One pupil speaks English as an additional language.

PURPOSE OF THE VISIT

This was an unannounced progress monitoring visit at the request of the Department for Education to check that the school has fully implemented the action plan submitted following the integrated inspection in March 2016. The focus of the visit was on safeguarding pupils' welfare; risk assessment; the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors; the recording of checks on the single central register of appointments; 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 3.4 – 3.8]

The school does not meet the requirements.

Safeguarding policy

The school's policy for safeguarding does not provide suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school because it does not accurately reflect the procedures within current statutory guidance. The published policy does not provide the name and contact details for the current designated safeguarding lead (DSL); it refers to a person who no longer holds this position of responsibility. It does not correctly set out types of abuse and neglect in line with the September 2016 edition of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE). The policy does not make provision for the discussion of Annex A of KCSIE with staff during induction training. The policy and the supporting whistleblowing policy do not clearly set out the correct referral process for allegations against staff, volunteers, the DSL, the head and the proprietor or procedures to follow for reporting concerns about children who may be at risk. There is no clear statement that the school recognises peer abuse as a potential safeguarding issue.

Pupil Welfare

Pupils say they feel safe and well cared for and that staff are approachable should they have a concern or worry. Staff have an appropriate understanding of the importance of listening to children and are aware that they can make direct referrals to the local authority. The school has ensured contact information for external agencies is

easily available. However, in practice, designated staff are unclear about systems for recording concerns and the correct reporting procedure they need to follow including the importance of maintaining confidentiality. The DSL has an insecure knowledge of all the early signs of abuse as reflected in current regulatory guidance. Staff are also unclear on safeguarding thresholds. Records to show that pupils' concerns are promptly addressed and shared with relevant agencies were unavailable for inspection, and staff with safeguarding responsibility have little knowledge about this information or where it is stored. The school has appropriate systems in place to teach pupils about on-line safety, and pupils who were interviewed during the inspection demonstrated that they are very aware of risks relating to the misuse of on-line technology.

Management of Allegations

Staff, including those with safeguarding, leadership and management responsibilities, are unclear about how to report allegations against any adult working at the school. This is because the safeguarding and whistleblowing policies do not clearly set out the procedures to follow in the event of such a concern. The policies do not provide clear guidance on the thresholds for referrals.

Training

The DSL has undertaken advanced safeguarding training in previous employment and with another authority, but currently this training is not in line with the locally agreed procedures for Hounslow. The deputy DSL was unavailable during the inspection and evidence of this person's training was not available. Some staff and those newly appointed, but not all, have received recent training in safeguarding arrangements, but this has not been delivered by appropriately qualified personnel and has not been in line with current statutory guidance or local procedures. The school does not keep a record of safeguarding training to help identify gaps in staff attendance. A staff code of conduct and charter of professional practice provide staff with adequate guidance in most respects. However, these documents do not make reference to whistleblowing procedures or contain guidance for staff on acceptable use of technologies, including electronic communication with pupils. Staff have received clear guidance on the use of personal mobile phones and cameras. Most say they have attended training on the prevention of radicalisation and the risks of extremism.

Safeguarding management and policy review

The proprietorial principal is duly nominated with safeguarding responsibility. The safeguarding policy makes reference to an annual review of procedures, but records of the most recent review were not available for inspection, and senior leaders were unaware of such a review having taken place. The newly appointed DSL, who is also responsible for safeguarding in the EYFS, is not a member of the school's leadership team and, therefore, does not have appropriate status and authority for the role.

Since the previous inspection, the school has addressed some of the concerns identified in the previous inspection relating to safer recruitment procedures. However, references, and employment history have not always been obtained for all recently appointed staff prior to starting work at the school. Where telephone references have been received, these have not been documented. Additionally, not all staff with existing disclosure and barring service checks (DBS) from other organisations have been checked against the barred list. The safer recruitment policy does not currently include reference to checking that staff are not prohibited from teaching or from leadership and management. In practice, these checks have been correctly undertaken and recorded on the SCRA.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – risk assessment [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16; EYFS requirements 3.64 – 3.65]

The school does not meet the Regulations.

The published health and safety policy on the school's website makes reference to the school's commitment to ensuring that risk assessments are undertaken to ensure the safety of both pupils and staff. However, it does not provide sufficient detail about how to carry out risk assessment procedures and what action staff should take to

ensure pupils' welfare. Senior leaders and managers have recently conducted a risk review of the school site. Documentation provides adequate assessment of the risks for off-site visits and most areas of the school premises. However, it does not adequately identify control measures to mitigate these risks. Risk assessments have not been reviewed or monitored to identify subsequent action or areas for improvement. A tour of the premises during the inspection identified a number of hazards within areas that pupils use, including a safety issue with a boundary wall. Following the previous inspection, a fault management recording book was introduced. However, this book is not used consistently to report faults, and staff are not fully aware of the new procedures for reporting issues to reduce risk. Daily safety checks of the site are undertaken by support staff, but these are not recorded or monitored by senior leaders to help establish patterns and reduce risk.

The suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18, 19, 20 and 21; EYFS requirements 3.9 – 3.13]

The school does not meet the Regulations.

Since the previous inspection, the school has reviewed its administrative procedures for recording checks on the single central register of appointments (SCRA). However, in a few instances, dates are not accurately recorded. Medical fitness checks have not been undertaken on all staff before they commence employment.

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.

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

The school does not meet the Regulation.

Senior leaders and managers do not demonstrate good knowledge and skills or fulfil their responsibilities effectively to ensure that the independent standards are met consistently. The newly appointed school leadership was unaware of current statutory guidance and other documentation which outlines how schools should comply with current regulations. As a consequence, lapses in meeting regulatory requirements compromise the promotion of pupils' well-being. The points of action identified at the previous inspection have not been met in most respects.

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, paragraph 7(a) and (b); EYFS requirements 3.4 – 3.8]

- Improve the wording of the safeguarding policy as follows:
 - provide up-to-date details of staff with designated responsibility for safeguarding;
 - set out types of abuse and neglect in line with current statutory guidance;
 - provide a clear outline of the referral process for allegations against all staff, volunteers, the DSL, head and proprietor;
 - set out the procedures for reporting concerns about children who may be at risk and define peer abuse as a potential safeguarding issue.
- Ensure that the staff code of conduct includes guidance on acceptable use of technology and protocols for use of electronic communication.

- Ensure the whistleblowing policy correctly sets out the referral process for allegations against all staff, volunteers, the DSL, head and proprietor.
- Ensure that staff with designated safeguarding responsibilities have appropriate status and authority for their role and have received advanced levels of training which is in line with locally agreed procedures.
- Ensure that all staff receive induction training which includes the school's child protection policy, the identity and role of the DSL, the staff code of conduct, whistleblowing procedures and acceptable use of technologies policy, a copy of *KCSIE* Part 1 and Annex A.
- Ensure that all staff receive update training which is delivered by appropriately qualified safeguarding personnel, which is in line with local procedures, and which includes: the correct procedures to follow when reporting concerns about pupils or allegations against staff, the head and proprietor; the full scope of signs of abuse and safeguarding thresholds, as reflected in current statutory guidance.
- Ensure that records of safeguarding concerns are correctly stored and monitored by persons with overall delegated safeguarding responsibility.
- Ensure that an annual review of safeguarding procedures takes place and that records to demonstrate the review has taken place are available.
- Ensure that all staff with existing DBS checks from other organisations are checked against the barred list before they begin work.
- Ensure that references and employment history are obtained for all staff prior to appointment.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – risk assessment [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16; EYFS requirements 3.64 – 3.65]

- Provide clear guidance for staff in the risk assessment policy on how to record and assess matters relating to pupils' welfare.
- Ensure that risk assessment records contain appropriate detail relating to control measures, and that the records are monitored and reviewed to identify any subsequent action that needs to be taken.
- Ensure that all areas of the school premises are appropriately assessed, that prompt action is taken to eliminate risk and that staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities relating to assessing risk and reporting it to ensure as far as practicable the safety of pupils.

The suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18 and 21; EYFS requirements 3.9 – 3.13]

- Ensure that medical fitness checks are obtained for all staff prior to appointment. [paragraph 18(2)(c)(ii)]
- Ensure that all checks are correctly recorded on the single central register of appointments. [21(3)(a)(ii)]

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34(a),(b),(c)]

- Ensure that leaders and managers have the necessary skills and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities so that the independent school standards are consistently met and that the well-being of pupils is actively promoted.