

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



23 February 2017

C Hamilton
St Ursula's Convent School
Crooms Hill
Greenwich
London
SE10 8HN

Dear Mrs Hamilton

No formal designation monitoring inspection of St Ursula's Convent School

Following my visit with Carolyn Dickinson, Her Majesty's Inspector, and Penny Barratt, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 9 February 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 at the school.

Evidence

Inspectors considered evidence that included:

- documentary evidence including case files, risk assessments, school policies, complaints, exclusions, school surveys on parents' and pupils' thoughts about the school, behaviour and attendance information
- reviews of safeguarding training provided by leaders and the school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum
- a scrutiny of the single central record of pre-employment checks on the suitability of adults to work with children at the school
- discussions with groups of pupils, both formally and informally
- discussions with a range of school leaders and staff
- discussions with the chair of governors, a representative from the Diocese of Southwark and the local authority's designated officer
- observations of lessons

- observations of breaktime, lunchtime and after school.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

Context

St Ursula's Convent School is a smaller than average-sized 11 to 16 secondary school for girls. It is a Roman Catholic faith school, within the Diocese of Southwark. It is heavily oversubscribed. The prior attainment of pupils from their primary school education is significantly above the national average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is just below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below the national average.

Safeguarding

Leaders have maintained the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures since the last inspection. School leaders have a thorough and accurate understanding of the local risks that could impact on the well-being of pupils. The range of effective strategies used by leaders to address these risks is highly appropriate. Projects such as 'Learning Together' for all Year 10 pupils and 'Partners in Preventing Suicide' are particularly successful. Working with external providers, these projects have supported the school to meet 'head on' the challenges of helping pupils deal with anxiety, stress and mental health. The school counsellor, the chaplain and the police liaison officer also provide additional and strong support for pupils. The police liaison officer has every confidence in the speed and rigour of leaders' actions in dealing with any issues that affects the safety of pupils.

Leaders and staff know pupils well. They respond swiftly to any concerns about the welfare of a pupil. Numerous case studies looked at by inspectors showed how, in response to situations that posed a risk to pupils, leaders had taken effective action including using early help. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported by the provision put in place by school leaders and teachers.

Leaders have ensured that staff are well trained, including by external speakers, in a wide range of safeguarding-related topics. This includes female genital mutilation, radicalisation, child sexual exploitation, honour-based violence and e-safety. Contracted staff, such as those that work in the canteen, have also been trained in safeguarding. Inspectors spoke to a range of staff and all were confident about the warning signs and symptoms to look out for in their interactions with pupils. Staff

know who to report issues to and do so quickly. Leaders told inspectors that through rigorous training, staff have been taught to 'think the unthinkable' in relation to safeguarding. Staff confirmed that this is the case, with one member of staff commenting, 'There is no complacency here.' The school has an effective internet filtering system to monitor its use by staff and pupils. All pre-employment checks on the suitability of staff to work with children meet statutory requirements.

Governors receive a detailed report on safeguarding every term. This includes important information such as the usage of the counselling service, staff training, referrals made to the designated safeguarding lead, any behaviour incidents, exclusions, and racist incidents. Leaders' use this report to evaluate the impact of the school's procedures. The safeguarding governor and the chair of governors visit the school regularly to monitor the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding procedures. Recently, the governors had debated the school's sex and relationship policy. They requested leaders to include more detailed reference to ensuring that pupils were learning even more about healthy and unhealthy relationships.

The PSHE curriculum helps pupils to learn about staying safe. The range of topics pupils study include drugs misuse, gangs, risk-taking behaviours, sexual health, resilience and sexting. These topics are delivered in an age-appropriate way, with the content being adapted each year to reflect what is happening in the local area and wider world. Pupils report that they know how to stay safe and they speak confidently, relevant to their age, about how to manage different risks, including sexting. Pupils have not yet had planned learning opportunities to develop their understanding of female genital mutilation or issues relating to being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

Pupils told inspectors, which is supported by the school's tracking information, that bullying is very rare. If it did occur, in the words of one pupil, 'It would be taken really seriously.' Pupils have a good overall understanding of the different types of bullying, however younger pupils were less secure in their knowledge of homophobic bullying. Pupils feel well cared for. In a recent school survey of 127 parents or carers, 94% of those who responded, strongly agreed or agreed that their children were safe in school.

The school has a very strict behaviour policy, including infringements relating to uniform. Pupils told inspectors that the very clear boundaries that the school has helps them feel safe. Fixed-term exclusions have been above the national average but are now falling. The school ensures that the small number of pupils who are withdrawn from lessons, placed either in the 'Merici room' or the learning support centre, are given appropriate work to complete. Leaders track any incidents leading to removal from lessons carefully.

Pupils of all ages interact well and are respectful towards each other. Pupils recognise and celebrate their differences. One pupil told an inspector, 'At this school you will not get judged by anyone.' Another pupil commented, 'This school is like

my second family.' Older pupils are strong role models to younger ones. Pupils behave safely at all times such as when in lessons, in corridors or during unstructured time at breaktime or lunchtime. Pupils told inspectors that there were no parts of the school where they felt unsafe. The school has a no mobile phone policy. The police liaison officer has trained pupils on how to stay safe on their journeys to and from school. Pupils told inspectors that they found this training useful. Pupils who cycle home all wear high-visibility clothing and helmets.

Leaders ensure that activities at the school such as trips and visits are appropriately risk assessed. Leaders have effective plans in place for serious incidents such as an evacuation of the building. Leaders have a range of policies that relate to safeguarding pupils' and staff welfare. Many of these are on the school's website. However, some of these policies are still in draft form and some are not as thorough as they should be, for example the equality and diversity policy and sections of the health and safety policy. Leaders acknowledge that these need to be updated to give full confidence to parents and carers that all of the school's safeguarding related policies are robust.

Priorities for further improvement

- Leaders and governors must ensure that the range of policies that relate to safeguarding and equal opportunities are updated, thorough and fully reflect the school's procedures.
- Leaders must ensure that there are planned and age-appropriate opportunities for pupils to learn about female genital mutilation and issues that relate to being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Archdiocese of Southwark, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Greenwich. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sam Hainey
Her Majesty's Inspector