

Oldham Hulme Grammar School

Chamber Road, Oldham, OL8 4BX

Date of visit 24th September 2015

Purpose of visit

This was an unannounced emergency visit at the request of the Department for Education which focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs), in particular, those relating to safeguarding, pupils' health and safety, measures to promote good behaviour and to guard against bullying, suitable supervision of pupils and the handling of complaints/leadership and management.

Characteristics of the School

The school is situated in Oldham, north east of Manchester, on a site overlooking Oldham and Manchester. It was originally founded in the early 17th century, but the current school began as separate girls' and boys' schools. It was originally founded in the early 17th century, but the current school began as separate girls' and boys' schools, overseen by a single board of governors. Following the purchase of a Kindergarten in 1999 the school is 'diamond' in model with a co-educational Kindergarten and sixth form, whilst pupils in Years 3-11 are taught separately. A Principal was appointed in 2006 who oversaw the re-organisation of the staff on a one school model. A new principal was appointed in September 2014. The previous inspection was in December 2010.

The total number of pupils in the school is 795 of whom 425 are boys and 370 girls. There are 53 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). One pupil has a statement of special educational needs and the school has identified 38 pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (SEND) all of whom receive specialist learning support. Thirty two pupils in the school have English as an alternate language (EAL). The school population is ethnically diverse, with about a quarter of pupils coming from families who originated in other countries.

Inspection findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7(a) and (b)] and EYFS requirements 3.4-3.8

The school meets the regulation.

Safeguarding is given a high priority within the school. The current safeguarding policy is compliant in content. It was updated in September 2015. However, at the time of the visit, this revised policy had not yet been reviewed and ratified by the Governors and was not yet

available to parents, on the school website. It is implemented effectively. It cross-refers to a staff behaviour code of conduct policy which gives the staff suitable guidance to ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place pupils or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a pupil. The school has a suitable recruitment policy. In discussion with a group of staff, all were clear about the school's appropriate mechanism for reporting immediately any concerns they might have about the inappropriate behaviour of another member of staff towards pupils. They know what to do in the event of a disclosure by a child, or an allegation against another member of staff or the Headmaster. The leadership is aware of its responsibility to refer on to the DBS and the NCTL anyone whose services are no longer used because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with children.

The school has regular contact with the local children's social care services and the local authority designated officer. Detailed records are kept of disclosures, allegations or concerns and referred on to external agencies expeditiously. The common assessment framework for the school is effectively co-ordinated.

The governing body receives at least an annual report from the DSL which describes the generalities of the issues dealt with, the training of staff and any other issues arising from the policy. They collectively review the policy and the procedures annually. The updated policy has yet to be reviewed.

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL), and the co-ordinating safeguard leads have all been trained within the required intervals by the local authority, and all staff have also been trained, including in how to recognise the signs of abuse, the importance of listening to pupils and an awareness concerning the wider aspects of safeguarding such as internet safety, emotional health issues and radicalisation. Those staff who have started at the school this term have received some induction concerning child protection and the associated documentation. All staff have been given a copy of *Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1 (July 2015)*.

In discussion, pupils said that they feel very safe within the school. They know who to approach if they have a concern, as the names and contact details of different people, are available to them around the school. They say they are taught about the effects of cyber-bullying, and how to keep themselves safe online. There are rules about when mobile phones and other devices can be used and all requirements specific to the EYFS are met. The PSHE scheme of work covers the importance of having respect for others, recognising when pressure from others threatens their personal safety and well-being, developing effective ways of resisting pressures and knowing how and when to get help.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils –measures to guard against bullying [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 10] and EYFS requirements 3.52-3.56

The school meets the regulation.

The school has a suitable anti-bullying policy which is implemented effectively. It takes into account the most recent guidance *Preventing and Tackling Bullying* published in March 2014. It acknowledges the seriousness of bullying and includes in its definition that it is repeated over time. Reporting procedures have been updated and clarified and staff have all been involved in drawing up and reviewing the current policy. The policy defines the signs and symptoms of bullying and staff are vigilant for changes in pupils' behaviour or demeanour to indicate something may be wrong. The school reinforces its stance on bullying through its programme of assemblies and its PSHE and information and communication (ICT) schemes of work. The policy is effectively linked to the school's behaviour policy which is effectively implemented and takes into consideration the age and needs of pupils. In the EYFS, pastoral issues are discussed in show and tell sessions and

pupils are supported in managing their feelings. Peer mentors across the school support pupils who have concerns. The anti-bullying policy includes suitable measures to address cyber-bullying. Pupils interviewed were clear about reporting bullying they experience, or that they witness, immediately. They felt that bullying is a rare occurrence but are confident that it is swiftly and effectively addressed should it occur. Incidents of bullying are recorded clearly in an appropriate sanctions record. This records that instances of bullying are few. Implementation of the school's policy to immediately inform parents about bullying, in order to work together to address it, is evident in written records of correspondence. Class teachers are informed immediately of any case of alleged bullying and concerns are shared at staff meetings to enable all staff to monitor potential cases. The policy and available records indicate that the school takes care to support both the victim and aggressor(s) in bullying incidents, including offering counselling to both pupil and their parents where it is felt desirable. The school acknowledges the potential damage bullying can cause and that it may need to refer a serious case to social services or the police.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – ensuring the proper supervision of pupils [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14] and EYFS requirements 3.28-3.36

The school meets the regulation.

Following recent review of, and changes to, the schools procedures with regard to supervision arrangements for after-school care, playground supervision and for extra-curricular activities, the school's supervision is effective, including in the EYFS. A new procedure for registration has been implemented and the minutes from staff meetings confirm discussion on the need for vigilance. Staff are now required to regularly check that all pupils are present and records show that an effective signing-out system for children has been now implemented when children are collected from the after-school care facility. In the EYFS, the door leading from the Nursery to the corridor is now securely kept closed.

The manner which complaints are handled [ISSR Part 7: paragraph 25] and EYFS requirements 3.74-3.75

The school does not meet the regulation.

The school's complaints policy contains all the required elements. It includes appropriate timescales for handling a concern or complaint. Implementation of the policy by staff is in accordance with its provision, but it has not been consistently applied by governors. In interview, staff confirmed their understanding of the need to respond to informal complaints promptly. They stated their aim to respond to parents' concerns within 48 hours and explained that all their responses are copied automatically to a pupil concern file held centrally. Inspectors' review of the system showed it to be highly effective. Records of written complaints to the head show that responses by senior staff are prompt and within the timescales of the policy. However, responses by governors relating to a recent appeal under stage three of the policy did not adhere to the stated timescales. All correspondence and actions by senior staff relating to formal complaints at stage two are appropriately recorded. These records of actions are consistent with relevant actions recorded in child protection records and are consistently communicated to parents. The governors' response to a recent stage three complaint did not allow for a panel hearing; parents were not given the opportunity to have the complaint discussed by at least three people not directly involved in the complaint. The recently appointed chair of governors has highlighted the need to follow the school's complaints policy more rigorously when addressing a parental complaint.

Regulatory action points

The school does not meet all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2015.

[ISSR Part 7: paragraph 25] and EYFS requirements 3.74-3.75 The manner which complaints are handled

1. Ensure that the schools complaints policy and procedures are fully implemented, in particular that formal complaints by parents to governors result in the offer of a panel hearing by at least three persons not directly involved in the complaint.