

MOON HALL COLLEGE AT BURY'S COURT

Flanchford Road, Leigh, Reigate, Surrey, RH2 8RE

4TH OCTOBER 2016

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Moon Hall College at Bury's Court educates boys and girls aged between seven and sixteen years. It was founded in 2005 by the Moon Hall Schools Educational Trust and provides a mainstream education for pupils who have specific learning difficulties, predominantly severe dyslexia. The trustees have proprietorial responsibility and form the governing body. The trust operates a sister school near Dorking. A new headmaster was appointed on 1 August 2016. The school's previous ISI inspection took place in October 2012. At the time of the inspection, 113 pupils were on roll, 69 boys and 44 girls, all of whom have varying degrees of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Thirty pupils have an education, health or care plan (EHC). All pupils are native English speakers.

PURPOSE OF THE 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), particularly those concerned with safeguarding and leadership and management.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

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

The school does not meet the Regulations.

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 have regard to the latest government guidance and has not been fully implemented.

Safeguarding policy

The policy currently in use within the school is dated September 2015 with a review date of June 2016. It does not have regard to the latest edition of *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)* September 2016. It has many appropriate features and, although over-long, demonstrates a commitment to promote pupils' well-being and acting in their best interest. It refers to the procedures of the Surrey Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) and commits the school to training staff in safeguarding. However, it lacks appropriate contact details to make the policy fully workable in practice, especially as it names the previous designated safeguarding lead (DSL) who has now left. It lacks clarity in the handling of allegations against staff in terms of the reporting channels, an implication that the school might investigate before making appropriate referrals, and by inferring that parental consent would be sought before making any referrals. It lacks appropriate coverage of peer abuse, the vulnerability of pupils with SEND, and teaching pupils how to keep themselves safe, including on-line safety issues such as cyber-bullying and 'sexting'.

An appropriate code of conduct covers many aspects of staff behaviour, relationships with pupils, physical contact and electronic media. An appropriate whistleblowing procedure is published, and staff spoken to were aware of its purpose. Arrangements to ensure safe recruitment of staff are contained within the safeguarding policy. The school has drawn up a suitable recruitment policy that covers all the required pre-appointment checks on staff.

Policy implementation

Safeguarding arrangements and practice were thoroughly reviewed by the former DSL at the end of the 2015/2016 academic year and a comprehensive report submitted to and approved by the governing body at its meeting in September 2016. However, this review and report did not identify that amendments were needed to ensure that the policy would have full regard to the latest version of *KCSIE*, which was available to schools from May 2016. A governor has been nominated to deal with safeguarding matters.

Training for the deputy DSLs is up to date and the deputy DSL spoken to stated that she had received refresher training from the Surrey LSCB in May 2016, although she was unable to find the certificate confirming this. She was unaware of the local authority's threshold criteria for referrals. The new headmaster, who will inherit the role of principal DSL from his predecessor, is awaiting inter-agency training from the LSCB. Update training for staff at the start of the current term has been effected by the requirement for them to complete on-line training in both safeguarding and the *Prevent* strategy. Staff confirm when they have completed this, although not all have currently done so. New staff are given website links to access the various required documents and policies as part of their induction. New staff have not yet received appropriate training specifically tailored to the needs of the school. Issues arising from the on-line training, especially that for *Prevent*, have not yet been followed up to relate it to the context of the school. Staff have all been sent copies of Part 1 of the latest *KCSIE*, but have not all confirmed that this has been read, and the school has not yet taken appropriate steps to help all staff understand the new provisions of this guidance. Staff working with children have not been sent Annex A to *KCSIE*. Nevertheless, the staff spoken to (including two new staff) demonstrated an appropriate knowledge of many of the issues contained in the latest guidance. They were clear about who to report welfare concerns and allegations to, and were aware that anyone may make a referral. Safeguarding updates and reminders are given at the daily briefing sessions before school and the weekly staff meetings.

In this small school, staff clearly know their pupils well, and supportive relationships with pupils encourage them to share concerns with a trusted adult. Although not mentioned in the policy, staff are well informed about the pastoral and welfare needs of those with SEND. Further support for pupils is provided by regular visits of the school counsellor who is a trained educational psychologist. The school has recently launched various initiatives for parents and pupils to ensure that they are aware of internet safety issues, and cyber-bullying is addressed through assemblies and in personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons.

The deputy DSL has not had occasion to refer any welfare concerns to the local authority, although she is clear about the need to contact children's services when needed. She reported that one pupil had been referred to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) in the last year. She holds thorough records of concerns passed to the DSLs by members of staff. None have appeared to meet the threshold for referral.

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.

Leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34 (1)(a) and (b)]

The school does not meet the Regulations.

Arrangements to ensure a smooth transition from the retiring head, who was also the DSL, to the incoming head at the start of September have not been fully effective, in terms of ensuring that the safeguarding and recruitment policies have been updated and in the arrangements to ensure that the required training for staff was effectively planned and completed promptly. Existing systems for regular review of policy content and monitoring of their implementation have not been systematically carried out by the full governing body. Current committee structures have not in the past given the oversight of safeguarding sufficient prominence. This has been recognised to an extent, by the restructuring of governors' committees and appropriate terms of reference for these committees are being drawn up. The new head has had a demanding first two months in office, taking on the role of primary DSL and being without a deputy head. Despite the shortcomings identified in this report, staff and school leaders have the well-being of pupils as a high priority.

REGULATORY ACTION POINTS

The school does not meet all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, in those areas covered on the visit.

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

Improve the wording and implementation of the safeguarding policy as follows:

Policy wording

- Ensure that the policy refers to and fully reflects the requirements of the latest government guidance.
- Ensure that it clearly states relevant internal and external contact details.
- Delete the wording that implies that parents could over-ride any necessary referral to external agencies where this is in the child's interests.
- Include appropriate coverage of peer abuse, the vulnerability of pupils with SEND, issues concerning cyber-bullying and 'sexting'.
- Provide further details of how the school teaches pupils to keep safe, including on-line safety.
- In the section covering allegations against staff:
 - delete any suggestion that the school will investigate before consulting the LADO for advice;
 - state clearly that the police will be informed if a criminal act may have been committed;
 - state that the head will contact the LADO within one working day of receiving an allegation;
 - make clear that staff should report an allegation against the head to the chairman, without informing the head;
 - state that the chairman will likewise contact the LADO within one working day if receiving an allegation against the head.

Policy implementation

- Ensure that the primary DSL receives appropriate training from the Surrey LSCB.
- Ensure that all teaching and non-teaching staff complete the on-line training on safeguarding and *Prevent*, confirmed by appropriate record keeping.
- Ensure that all teaching and non-teaching staff confirm that they have received and read Part 1 of *KCSIE*.
- Ensure that all staff working with children receive copies of Annex A of *KCSIE*.
- Take steps to ensure that all staff understand the new requirements of *KCSIE*, and its relevance to the specific circumstances of the school and its pupils.

Leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34 (1)(a) and (b)]

- Ensure that new arrangements for governors' committees enable the full board to recognise the importance of safeguarding within the school and understand the requirements of the new guidance.
- Develop improved structures to enable the full board to review policies regularly and monitor the effectiveness of their implementation.