

School Safeguarding Officer Visit

24/11/23

My name is Rachel Walker, and I am the schools safeguarding officer for the Royal Borough of Greenwich.

I was asked by the school's designated safeguarding lead, Joseph Turner Wing, to spend a day at the school and look at safeguarding practices and talk to staff, students, parents, and governors

I was given information about the school's setting and the diverse community it serves.

I met with different members of staff including an office staff member, two teacher assistants, a class teacher, the three safeguarding leads, the safeguarding governor and a parent governor, a parent, and three year 6 students.

I was informed about three areas the school is currently looking at - Inclusion, mental health and wellbeing for students and staff and working with parents.

I was informed about the work the school did to achieve the Inclusion Mark award giving the school centre of excellence status and a framework for inclusive practice.

The school is working towards obtaining a Mental Health and Wellbeing award- this will involve a staff member acting as a coordinator to organise a 'change' team to look at the criteria and then a framework for improvement in other areas of the school- this will allow the school to use the information gathered to inform other school policies.

Another area the school is looking to develop further is parent partnership. A working party- staff, parents, governors, local community will be set up and the objectives explored as well as how to coordinate which will take 12-15 months.

The school has one designated safeguarding lead, two deputy DSLs and four others trained making a total of eight who are all trained to the DSL level. I was told that the culture in the school is that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. I observed posters around the school identifying the safeguarding leads and information about how to report safeguarding concerns, the signs/symptoms of abuse, online safety, at home concerns- it is made clear who to report to. I was also advised that all staff are trained and advised to act in real time and not only report their concerns on the school's incident database, *cpoms*. I was told that a designated safeguarding lead is always available.

I was advised that staff use the Royal Borough of Greenwich's direct services for training needs and the 2-year DSL is also completed through the local authority. For other training needs Judicium training services are also used.

I was also informed that Prevent has been a recent focus at a staff meeting and found that staff had awareness of this area.

One of the Deputy DSL's, a manager in the office, is responsible for the single central register being up to date and similar safeguarding administration.

Online safety is led by a curriculum lead and an audit of online safety has been conducted. The school uses a filter system for its IT use – LGFL. The ICT coordinator is responsible for IT being used safely within the curriculum in liaison with the DSL team.

I was advised that every other week the safeguarding team meet to discuss children that staff are concerned about including looking at contextual safeguarding. Minutes from the meetings demonstrated that there is a clear focus and actions taken in a timely fashion.

The school's attendance officer is responsible for sending out an email alert list to the DSL's daily if key children are not present or are late to school. The school has a robust absence procedure in place that all are implementing effectively. The school works closely with the Attendance officer at Royal Greenwich and referrals are made when attendance becomes a cause for concern.

The inclusion team meet fortnightly and discusses any referrals from teachers and considers the support needed including from external partners and agencies. I met with the inclusion manager who also has an SEN role within the school- she coordinates the ECHPs, makes referrals, annual reviews, addresses yearly targets and personal learning plans (PLP) and informed me that the school has 14 students with ECHPs, 6 of whom are nonverbal children- we discussed the importance of building relationships with parents and the length of time it takes to complete each referral. The school holds Inclusion team meetings (I was advised about the number of children subject to child protection plans) vulnerable students are discussed and planned for. PIVATS is implemented for students making less progress- pre curriculum and teaching adapted to support their needs.

The DSL informed me that early intervention is prioritised at the school and that Reception resources are targeted to ensure the best possible outcomes.

I was told that child protection conferences, core groups, and TAC meetings are all attended in person and staff are supported to carry out their duty in this area by line managers and external supervision is available from a clinical psychologist.

Two of the DSLs are looking at the impact of covid on mental health within the school community as well as issues relating to poverty. Additional CAMHS support for parents has been brought in – 3 counsellors were seeing 15 students a week (now reduced to 2) – the positive impact is shown by ability to learn and engage with lessons. One of the counsellors supports adults such as parents and staff to ensure that all aspects are considered. Learning mentors work with students too and there were many great examples of progress and increased engagement as a result.

I asked about the whistleblowing policy, and I was informed by the DSL that the school has good leadership procedures and staff concerns are addressed in a timely fashion if they arise. The policy is circulated to all staff and there are posters advertising procedures for raising concerns displayed prominently around the school. Files are held securely and records handled in an appropriate way and signed for by receiving schools in a timely fashion.

The teaching assistants I met told me that she receives safeguarding training on inset days including the updates to *Keeping Children Safe in Education*. She added that her training needs are met and that she feels confident to ask for support and is encouraged to do so. I was also advised that the school uses other websites as well as the National College which allows staff to use their training webinars and access guidance.

The school's attendance officer is also a member of the Inclusion team. She looks at behaviour concerns and low attendance, compiles the alert of non-attendees looks for emerging and/or developing patterns- i.e.: students who are not collected after school for example. She will oversee welfare check requests and arrange for home visits on the 3rd day of a child being off school for illness. Welfare calls to police will be requested if parents cannot be contacted and absence is a cause for concern or unexplained.

The school has strong school-parent relationship- the planned work to improve this will strive to develop this area even further.

I met with the school chair of governors who is also responsible for safeguarding- she has held a governing role for the past 5-6 years. She and the DSL meet termly but regular updates are shared with safeguarding matters the focus.

The governing body utilise the LA's governor services training and have external validation as well as Judicium training too. We discussed how the school manage safeguarding within the school and that there is a very strong governing body currently who challenge senior leadership constructively and hold leaders to account.

The safeguarding governor checks the single central registry termly in a way that adheres to data protection guidance, and she has completed Safer Recruitment training. I was advised that all checks are carried out on new applicants including enhanced DBS checks and Section 128 checks which are now added to the SCR. Barred check list also checked/completed as well as the prohibition from teaching check completed (specific to teachers). DBS checks are completed by the office manager including the governing body.

I met with two parents, one is also a governor and a foster carer of a child who attends the school. Both said they feel confident to ask the school about anything and that the children are happy, and they don't have any safeguarding concerns. They confirmed that safety in general is very good- main school gates operate with security fobs which makes both parents and children feel safe. Bikes and scooters are also safe commented one of the parents. In terms of bullying – there is clear communication between parents and carers and the school's position and action is clear in the school's behaviour policy and displayed on the school's website. Both parents said that staff are available and easy to access with the parent governor sharing that information is directly fed back to a parent if a child had had a particularly difficult day. I asked about PEPS preparation, and I was advised that the child knows who to talk to which is 'first class' practice and that staff are visible, and that school are willing to chair/hold meetings. The DSLs are all known, and the school makes staff very accessible. After school activities are available. The safeguarding processes are clear in relation to school trips and outside agencies. One of the parents commented that the recent way the school discussed the current conflict between Ukraine and Russia was both open and compassionate.

I spoke to another teaching assistant who is also a parent of a child and a former adult social worker who said that the school is excellent on safeguarding in her view, regular emails to staff and parents, that guidance is to immediately escalate and record later and that annual safeguarding training is offered. This view was shared by all staff members I encountered during my visit.

I also met with year 6 students who were very keen to share their enjoyment of attending their school. They all have student leadership roles which I recommended they pursue at their secondary school.

Recommendations for moving forward- the DSL and I discussed how Prevent training updates might be a focus with any newly appointed governors as well as WRAP training.

National online safety training for all new staff as they join.

I looked at the school's website and the policies I looked at were up to date and the additional information included is very useful and easy to access.

In summary, it is my view after spending a day with staff, governors, students, and parents and looking over policy documents online and on display around the school that safeguarding arrangements are effective at Charlton Manor Primary School.

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