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3 July 2017

Mrs Kathy Hocking  
Principal  
Callington Community College  
Launceston Road  
Callington  
Cornwall  
PL17 7DR

Dear Mrs Hocking

### **No formal designation monitoring inspection of Callington Community College**

Following my visit with Andrew Lovett, Her Majesty's Inspector, Tracey Ledger, Social Care Regulatory Inspector and Julie Nash, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 14 and 15 June 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 scrutinised the single central record and other documentation related to the safe recruitment of staff. In addition, an inspector looked carefully at safeguarding and child protection policy and practice, including at the quality of record-keeping and the impact of work with other agencies. Inspectors met with you and with other leaders, including with the college safeguarding team. The lead inspector met with two governors and with representatives from the Ivybridge Academy Trust, and with the chief executive officer of the trust. Inspectors held discussions with various groups of pupils, both formally and informally, and met with focus groups of staff. An inspector also spoke on the telephone to staff from the local authority, including the local authority designated officer.

Inspectors scrutinised a range of other documents including governors' minutes, a recent external audit of safeguarding and academy and trust-wide safeguarding

policies. They also looked at attendance, exclusion and behaviour records. In addition, inspectors considered the effectiveness of arrangements to safeguard pupils who attend alternative provision. They examined procedures intended to ensure pupils undertaking work experience are kept safe. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including at break and lunchtimes, and during the changeover times between lessons.

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

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

#### **Context**

Callington Community College joined the Ivybridge Academy Trust (IAT) in October 2016. Its predecessor school, also called Callington Community College, had originally converted to an academy in 2011. When the predecessor school was inspected by Ofsted in January 2015, safeguarding arrangements were found not to meet requirements. A subsequent full inspection of the school in March 2015 judged the school to require special measures. During the last 12 months, there have been significant changes to the composition and structure of the senior leadership team, including the substantive appointment of the current principal. A new local governing board was constituted in January 2017, shortly after the college joined the IAT multi-academy trust.

Callington Community College is a larger-than-average secondary school which caters for pupils from ages 11 to 18. There are currently 1,221 pupils on roll. The vast majority of pupils are of a White British background and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is low. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Levels of mobility for pupils are in line with the national average.

#### **The effectiveness of leadership and management in ensuring that safeguarding and child protection arrangements keep pupils safe**

Leaders, governors and the trust have driven improvements to safeguarding very effectively. Previous weaknesses in the ethos and culture of safeguarding at the school have been tackled robustly. In the context of recent significant change arising from the re-organisation of the leadership team, and the changes to governance, this represents a significant step forward in the capacity and effectiveness of the school.

Around the school, pupils show respect for each other, for adults and for their school. They understand the importance of tolerance and respect, and the impact that their words and actions may have on others. Pupils move calmly and sensibly around the school, and relationships between pupils and staff are typically warm,

friendly and 'firm but fair'. Pupils say that staff will challenge any inappropriate or discriminatory language. They are more confident that bullying will be dealt with effectively and that they have adults they can turn to with any worries or concerns. For example, many of the pupils spoken to greatly valued the advice and support from the school counselling service, and were aware of help available through the 'Tic-Tac' centre. As a result, pupils who spoke to inspectors say they feel their school is a safe place to be where they are confident they will be listened to and treated as individuals. Pupils say they feel able to share any concerns about their social or emotional welfare and well-being.

The impact of the trust and new school leadership in a relatively short period has been impressive. The trust has taken robust and rapid action to improve governance and to strengthen the capacity of leaders to tackle the school's most pressing concerns. Although recently reconstituted, the local governing board has made a very strong start. It is developing a more effective approach to supporting and challenging leaders, and to understanding the work of the school. The trust board in particular is successfully modelling and supporting effective governance. Nevertheless, the trust, governors and school leaders all rightly recognise there remains more to do before expectations and approaches are fully established across the school. There remain some inconsistencies in how some school policies and systems are followed – for example, in how well all staff have implemented approaches for improving pupils' behaviour.

The trust, governors and leaders at all levels have rightly placed enormous importance on improving the effectiveness of safeguarding. There are close working relationships between all parties involved in securing these improvements. For example, the establishment of a trust-wide safeguarding forum is already having a positive impact. This forum enables the sharing of practice across schools in the trust and is helping to develop a set of safeguarding 'indicators' to enable governors and the trust to hold schools to account more effectively. Governors recognise these indicators must be both broad and nuanced enough to enable them to understand, as one governor remarked, 'how we are making a difference to the more subtle aspects of safeguarding'. Trustees are ensuring that trust-wide policies take account of trust schools situated in different local authority areas.

Leaders recognise that much of their focus has been on 'getting things in place', primarily to establish clear expectations and routines throughout the school. As a result, improvement planning has addressed a series of tasks to be completed, rather than clearly stating how the consistency and impact of changes will be checked and evaluated. Nevertheless, leaders' approach to planning improvement is gathering momentum as the capacity of leadership and governance increases. For example, leaders are now more active in gathering the views of pupils about their experience of school, including through the school council and tutor group representatives. However, leaders and governors also recognise that the views of a range of stakeholders – including parents – could be more systematically used to understand the impact of improvements to safeguarding at the school.

The school's approach to keeping pupils safe from the risk of harm is effective. The re-organisation of the leadership and safeguarding teams has been a key step in ensuring safer and more effective practice across the school. Working relationships with partner agencies have improved considerably. For example, where concerns about children have been raised with agencies, these are followed up promptly. Nevertheless, leaders recognise that they should not be afraid to hold other agencies to account more rigorously when concerns about children are not being addressed quickly enough.

Expectations of professional standards and the conduct of staff are clear and transparent. Staff understand their responsibilities to uphold these expectations and to use procedures such as 'whistleblowing' where they have any concerns. There is a clear sense among staff of a responsibility to contribute to a culture of safeguarding and to tackle discrimination and poor behaviour – as one member of staff remarked, 'it is no longer somebody else's problem'. The school's approach to dealing with any allegations against staff is sensitive, well managed and robust. Similarly, the procedures to ensure safe recruitment are strong and the single central record of employment checks is complete and accurate. Suitable safeguarding checks are also carried out on placements which provide work experience for pupils. Risk assessments are thorough and fully up to date.

Child protection training for staff is detailed and comprehensive. It is effective in providing staff and adults with the skills, knowledge and understanding they need. There are good plans in place for further training to ensure staff are kept fully up to date. Staff understand clearly how they should notify and escalate any concerns in school, including if they feel issues they raise are not being addressed quickly enough. Across the school, there is now a more proactive and rigorous approach, and the culture is one in which staff learn together in order to safeguard children.

Leaders and managers have also made important changes to how they oversee the effectiveness of safeguarding practice. This is also the case for a small number of vulnerable pupils, such as children who are looked after, or care leavers. Leaders ensure that pupils' progress and welfare are checked closely. Nevertheless, there are some inconsistencies in how some vulnerable children are supported in school. While there are good plans in place for pupils who display challenging behaviour, planning is not as strong for pupils who have additional needs due to their vulnerabilities. Plans do not always state clearly enough the expectations on staff to manage and reduce risk for these pupils consistently and with confidence.

Staff are now taking more responsibility for improving behaviour, and pupils say that it is getting better throughout the school. The regular analysis of information about instances of poor behaviour is enabling leaders to understand trends and to tackle poor behaviour using different strategies. For example, form tutors now receive much more timely information about which of their tutees have received behaviour sanctions. This enables tutors to look at pupils' behaviour across various subjects, and to understand how and why poor behaviour happens for some pupils

in their form groups. Individual behavioural plans are also proving effective in ensuring that a small number of pupils with specific behavioural needs are safeguarded appropriately.

Pupils say that some poor behaviour does happen in a few of their lessons, especially for younger pupils. However, they have much more confidence that staff will tackle poor behaviour when it occurs. They also say that teachers are getting much better at managing it. Despite this, they feel that some teachers do not tackle poor behaviour consistently, leading to frustration and slow improvements to behaviour in a few lessons. During the inspection, very little disruption to learning of any kind was seen. Conduct around the school and in social spaces, including the canteen, was also positive – although pupils say that behaviour is sometimes poor on a few school bus routes. A small number of staff are appropriately trained in the use of restraint, although this is very rarely used.

Safeguarding arrangements for pupils who attend alternative provision meet requirements. Over time, while the overall number of fixed-term exclusions from school has been broadly average, exclusion has disproportionately affected pupils attending some types of alternative provision. While exclusion in these instances is very often used as a 'last resort', leaders are aware that, at times, this provision may not meet the behavioural needs of a small number of pupils.

Leaders are also getting better at tackling poor attendance and punctuality. Effective practice is developing well, particularly in Year 9. Actions to reduce levels of absence of different groups of pupils are also having a positive impact. Despite these improvements, overall attendance remains broadly average. This is because improvements to attendance are not yet being led strategically. Stronger practice is not consistently shared across different year groups. Nevertheless, staff at all levels are alert to issues of absence and punctuality which may indicate safeguarding concerns. However, there is some inconsistency in how policy and practice are applied in cases of children at risk of going missing from education or from home. While this inconsistency does not place children at risk, leaders rightly recognise that practice could be further strengthened.

The contribution of the curriculum to pupils' understanding of equality, and their awareness of respect, tolerance and social and cultural diversity, is strong. This is particularly the case in their personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons. Pupils spoken to said how much they valued these lessons and found them interesting and thought-provoking. Pupils enjoy engaging with sensitive and challenging topics and most do so in a mature and respectful way. This is because there is an expectation that staff will explore these issues in lessons when they arise, or when they are covered in various one-off 'collapse days'.

Several examples of pupils' understanding and interest in wider contemporary and social issues were seen. For example, the Amnesty Youth Group were busy planning a lunchtime event to celebrate the life of Jo Cox MP. An assembly led by Year 8

pupils on the theme of 'respect' had been meticulously planned and researched – and the behaviour of pupils who attended was exemplary.

Leadership of this aspect of the curriculum is effective and is well supported by a dedicated team of specialist teachers. Good plans are in place to develop assessment in PSHE, and to understand where topics and themes are also covered in other subjects across the curriculum. The use of tutorial time to support the PSHE curriculum is more variable; some tutors always use part of tutor time to discuss issues and themes. By contrast, some other tutors rarely do this. This leads to some inconsistency in the overall coherence of the PSHE programme in Years 7 to 11. In the sixth form, there is no equivalent PSHE curriculum. While some use is made of tutorial sessions in the sixth form, leaders recognise that this is an important area for further development.

### **External support**

The school hosts an on-site facility known as the 'Tic Tac' centre, which is open every day during lunchtimes. This provision comprises two doctors and three practice nurses from Tamar Valley Health, who provide independent and confidential help and advice to pupils who may have concerns.

The school has been supported by the local authority in improving safeguarding practice. Leaders have sought advice on different occasions and have also ensured that the local authority is fully informed of actions taken to address any allegations against staff. The trust has commissioned a safeguarding review from an external consultant, who has provided useful feedback on current practice.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- improve the evaluation of safeguarding by taking account of a range of indicators of impact, including drawing on evidence from the views of pupils and parents and other stakeholders
- ensure that policies and procedures for escalating concerns about children who are at risk of going missing from education or from home are rigorously and consistently implemented
- fully embed existing policies and procedures, particularly the consistency with which staff implement expectations and approaches for improving pupils' behaviour and attendance
- Improve the consistency with which tutor time is used to support the PSHE programme. Further develop an appropriate PSHE programme for the sixth form.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing board, the chair of Ivybridge Academy Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cornwall. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lee Northern  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**