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Maple Hayes School

Safeguarding Review

8-9th January 2017, 17th February 2017

Carried out by
Catherine Stormonth



Maple Hayes School
Safeguarding Review
January and February 2017

Description of the School

Maple Hayes School is an independent day special school for pupils with specific learning difficulties. Primarily, these relate to dyslexia (difficulties with reading, spelling and writing) although many pupils also have dyscalculia (difficulties with numbers) and dysgraphia (difficulties with handwriting). Some pupils have further complex needs, such as additional language difficulties, aspects of autism and dyspraxia. All pupils are of at least average ability but have failed to make sufficient progress in mainstream school due to their specific difficulties. There are currently 108 pupils on roll aged 7 to 17 years, three quarters of whom are boys. Nearly all pupils are White British. Most pupils have an Education and Health Care Plan of their special educational needs and are placed and funded by their local authorities. Currently, there are 16 placing local authorities and a small number of pupils are funded privately.

Maple Hayes School is a well-known centre of expertise, training and research for dyslexia and has developed and implemented a unique way of addressing literacy.

At the last Ofsted inspection in May 2015 the school was found to have outstanding behaviour and safety. 'The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding'. 'Safeguarding arrangements are rigorous' and 'pupils know how to keep themselves safe'.

The Safeguarding Review

This safeguarding review was carried out by an experienced and active safeguarding consultant who evaluated the school's arrangements for safeguarding including:

- the extent to which leaders, proprietors and managers create a positive culture and ethos where safeguarding is an important part of everyday life in the school, backed up by training at every level
- the content, application and effectiveness of safeguarding policies and procedures and safer recruitment and vetting processes
- the quality of safeguarding practice, including evidence that staff are aware of the signs that pupils may be at risk of harm either within the setting or in the family or wider community outside the setting
- the timeliness of response to any safeguarding concerns that are raised
- the quality of work to support multi-agency plans around the pupil

**The safeguarding evidence considered:**

1. Pupils individual self-evaluations at their Annual Reviews about their education and school life
2. Whole school pupil survey with a 90% return rate
3. Discussions with pupils and specific meetings with the youngest and oldest pupils.
4. Parents and carers' yearly comments about the quality of education their children are receiving
5. Discussions with parents and carers and a survey of KS2/3 parents and carers at their consultation afternoon
6. Single Central Record, Safer Recruitment Policy and the last 5 staff appointments safer recruitment checks as case studies
7. Welfare arrangements: welfare room and resources check, catering for pupil medical conditions, health care plan information, first aid training records, information about accidents and everyday minor first aid treatments,
8. Safeguarding – interview with the Proprietors
9. Meetings with the Designated Safeguarding Leaders which includes the headteacher
10. H&S documents: copies of H&S audits including school buildings and grounds, fire, electrical and gas safety.
11. Risk Assessments for educational visits and more hazardous subjects: DT, science, PE, art and computing. Risk assessments also for COSHH, behaviour and use of machinery
12. Child Protection Policy, CP guidance/staff handbook, CP monitoring including details of external agency involvement and staff CP training
13. Attendance data and information about persistent absence and follow up procedures
14. Information about behaviour, all forms of bullying, exclusions



Main findings

The effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements

Maple Hayes School meets all safeguarding statutory requirements and provides high quality policies, practice and procedures and overall the quality of safeguarding leadership and management, provision and outcomes are all outstanding.

Outcomes for pupils - outstanding

Annual Reviews and Induction

Pupils' self-evaluation records for Annual Reviews show that **all** pupils are very positive about their time at Maple Hayes School. Prospective pupil week long trial feedback forms also show immediate enthusiasm for the specialist school and all it offers to help and support their learning difficulties.

They indicate an overwhelmingly positive picture about the strengths of the pastoral care and how well they are looked after and how much happier they are at Maple Hayes School. Pupil's comments indicate further how pleased they are at the excellent progress they have made in their reading and writing and the big differences this has made to their lives. Their self esteem and self belief are restored and they have ambitious aspirations linked to their learning success. Parents' comments amplify their children's comments and indicate some transformed lives and massive improvements in the quality of family life when their children's learning needs are met so well. One said that 'life is no longer a battle to get my son to go to school. He looks forward to going to school for the 6 days a week and takes pride in all his learning achievements which are quite remarkable'.

Whole School Pupil Safeguarding Survey

97 pupils responded to a safeguarding survey questionnaire representing a 90% return rate. Each year group was investigated further and all the data analysed. 98% of pupils who responded said that they felt safe in school which confirms that Maple Hayes School is definitely a 'safe school'. Statistics in the 93-97% range further confirm that pupils feel safe in the classroom, around the school building and in the playground. Pupils feel safe from bullying, from cyber-bullying and feel that the school deals with bullying well in the rare times it is reported. 97% of pupils say that they know how to keep themselves safe, feel well looked after and the school 'cares about me'.

Year group survey analyses showed that the youngest pupils were the most enthusiastic about all aspects of the school and feel very safe and happy. A very small number of the oldest pupils had some mixed feelings about being 'listened to about my concerns' and 'having someone to talk to when worried'. The same pupils were positive about all other aspects and contradicted themselves when they confirmed that they felt well looked after and the school cared about them. Four Year 11 pupils didn't answer all of the questions. It was because of this slight negativity that a follow up meeting was held with all Year 11 pupils and discussions explored pupils' views in depth. The Year 11 student body confirmed that although they felt safe in school they raised issues with inconsistent behaviour management and the tight control. They felt the latter was not always necessary as they behaved well, could be trusted and could take on greater responsibility. No underlying safeguarding issues were found.



Other documentary evidence and records indicate outstanding behaviour and attitudes to learning and excellent progress in pupils' personal development. The behaviour incident frequency rate is low for a school of this size and the Saturday detentions are very effective deterrents.

KS2/3 Parent and Carers' Survey and Consultation

85% of parents and carers from the lower part of the school responded to the survey which represents the majority of them. Most parents went out of their way to make an additional 41 comments on their survey forms and were keen to talk about the school when interviewed.

All those who responded were 100% positive about all aspects of the school. The results show a parent body that feels the school meets their children's needs exceptionally well. Six parents felt that communications were 'mostly' effective and although still positive it might be an area that the school might like to reconsider. Three parents said they didn't know how the school dealt with bullying as they hadn't come across any bullying in the school to be able to comment.

Many parents expressed their gratitude for helping to turn their children's lives around and help pupils to be able to read and write in such a short period of time. There was a consistent theme about the high quality of education, how safe the learning environment is and how their children's confidence and happiness had returned after so much damage in their previous mainstream schools. A notable comment confirmed 'my daughter was unable to read and write 12 months ago and could not even write her name before she attended Maple Hayes School. But now reads with enthusiasm and writes beautifully and is very safe and happy'. Another parent said that 'Maple Hayes School did more for my son in 6 months than the previous 6 years in mainstream'.

Only one negative comment was received from a parent who ticked all the positive boxes. This concerned one member of staff who manages behaviour inconsistently.



Provision for safeguarding - outstanding

How effectively Proprietors and leaders create a safeguarding culture in the school

Proprietors, leaders and managers have created a positive culture and an openness to discussing any safety worries. Many of the pupils arrive at Maple Hayes School with a history of mainstream school failure. They are frequently bullied or feel isolated. It is evident from their own and their parents' testimonies that their confidence and self esteem quickly return in tandem with the rapid improvements they make in their learning – especially their literacy. Pupils say they feel safe. The school is vigilant in promoting the welfare and safety of pupils and takes timely and appropriate safeguarding action for those that need extra help or who may be suffering or likely to suffer harm. Staff know pupils very well in the small classes and effectively exercise their professional judgement in keeping learners safe and happy which helps to provide a high quality school life.

Leaders, managers and Proprietors fulfil statutory requirements across all safeguarding aspects including child protection, safer recruitment, welfare and health and safety. Child protection and staff code of conduct policies and procedures are in place and regularly reviewed to keep all learners safe.

Staff, leaders and managers recognise that children and young people are capable of abusing their peers and this risk is covered well in the child protection policy peer on peer section. The child protection policy reflects the additional barriers that exist when recognising the signs of abuse and neglect of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is a key strength of the school when these barriers are overcome and pupils develop the self belief that they can succeed at this school where they previously felt despair.

Staff, leaders and volunteers receive appropriate training on safeguarding at induction that is updated regularly. In addition, they receive information (via emails, DfE circulars, newsletters and staff training) on safeguarding and child protection regularly. On questioning, they show good knowledge of their responsibilities relating to the protection of young people and the benefits of their recent training are obvious. Staff are supported to have a good awareness of the signs that a learner is being neglected or abused, as described in 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' local guidance.

The headteacher and Bursar are the designated senior members of staff in charge of safeguarding arrangements. They have been trained to the appropriate level and understand their responsibilities relating to the protection of children and the safeguarding of all learners well. Designated members of staff undertake safeguarding training every two years and their knowledge and skills are refreshed annually. During term time the designated safeguarding leaders are always available school during opening hours for staff to discuss any possible safeguarding concerns. The school identifies learners who may be at risk by close monitoring of behaviour and good links with the local children's safeguarding board team who advise when needs arise.

The school has clear policies and procedures for dealing with pupils who go missing from education and are alert to signs that learners might be at risk of abuse or neglect. Appropriate action is taken when learners stop attending the school or do not attend regularly; this includes informing the local authority when a pupil who is deemed at risk is away from school for more than two days or their name is going to be deleted from the register.



Effective action is taken to ensure that children are taught about safeguarding risks, including online risks and how to take responsibility for their own personal safety and that of others. There is a clear approach to implementing the Prevent Duty and keeping children and learners safe from the any danger of radicalisation and extremism however low the risk may be.

The school takes effective action to prevent and tackle discriminatory and derogatory language – this includes language that is derogatory about disabled people and homophobic and racist language. Pupils are able to understand, respond to and calculate risk effectively, for example risks associated with child sexual exploitation, domestic violence, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, substance misuse, gang activity and are aware of the support available to them in school and in the community should they feel worried.

Staff, leaders and managers understand the risks posed by adults or young people who use the internet to bully, groom or abuse young people. There are well-developed strategies in place to keep learners safe and to support them in learning on how to keep themselves safe. They oversee the safe use of electronic and social media and take action immediately if they are concerned about bullying or risky behaviours. Appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to protect learners from potentially harmful online material. The school does not allow the use of mobile telephones on the school premises.

Appropriate and thorough arrangements are made with regards to health and safety to protect staff and learners from harm. The school's extensive premises and grounds provide a pleasant, interesting and safe learning environment with secure access.

Arrangements for staff recruitment and vetting are excellent

The school was able to demonstrate that it meets all compliance regulations and duties for safer recruitment. The single central record is complete and meets statutory requirements. The school's staff appointment processes were tested and found to be outstanding and all safeguards are in place for safer recruitment. The school's security arrangements for ensuring that visitors to the school are suitable and checked and monitored as appropriate are good.

The quality of safeguarding practice is outstanding

There is clear evidence that the school is implementing its safeguarding policy and processes effectively and keeping them under review. As well as ensuring that children and learners are safeguarded while on the premises, the school is proactive about anticipating and managing risks that children and learners face in the wider community. The school adheres to the locally agreed arrangements for safeguarding children. All concerns and the action taken in response are accurately recorded with clear chronology. A small number of pupils are currently receiving support from children's Social Care services. There is a good working relationship with external agencies in this regard

The arrangements for handling serious incidents and allegations are excellent

There has been one serious accusation recently and this was investigated thoroughly with advice from the LADO on remedial action to take. Due to effective security and CCTV footage the allegations were proven to be false.