

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



16 October 2018

Mr D Luckhurst
Principal
Drapers' Academy
Settle Road
Harold Hill
Romford
Essex
RM3 9XR

Dear Mr Luckhurst

No formal designation inspection of Drapers' Academy

Following my visit with Rachel Clarke, Ofsted Inspector, to your academy on 25 September 2018, 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 without notice under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and, consequently, the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils.

Evidence

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection, parents' opinions, pupils' behaviour and attendance. They met trustees, senior leaders, members of staff and several groups of pupils formally and informally. They observed during classes, lesson changeovers, breaktime and on the roads close to the school at the end of the school day.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

Context

This is an average-sized secondary school with a sixth form. It serves a diverse population, with the majority ethnicity among pupils being White British. An above average proportion of pupils are entitled to pupil premium funding. The proportions of pupils who speak English as an additional language, and of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, are below average. Staffing is stable and the pupil roll is growing. The last full inspection of the school was in 2017.

The school's safeguarding procedures remain sound and well organised. Policies are thorough and up to date. The school makes systematic, carefully logged checks on staff, visitors and volunteers, and on their suitability to work with children. Staff are suitably and regularly trained in their child protection responsibilities, and they feel confident in their responsibilities. The school keeps detailed records of matters relating to child protection, and uses these effectively to keep pupils safe. However, inspectors did find that very recent occurrences had been recorded, but not yet properly typed up or uploaded to the school's electronic system. The school is clear about its responsibility for preventing radicalisation and extremism, and in supporting pupils to keep safe in the community and when online. Staff, and visitors to the school, give pupils clear teaching and messages about these issues, which the pupils value.

Pupils feel safe and well cared for. Bullying is rare, and they feel very confident in the ability of the staff to deal with it. Staff know the locality that the school serves well and keep a close watch on the needs of pupils and families. Pupils speak very highly of how well the school, particularly the pastoral teams and the Oak Centre, look after them. The school has developed a strong record in enabling pupils who become vulnerable in some way to work through their problems and continue their education successfully.

Due to your concerted efforts, and revised procedures, the rate of pupil exclusion has fallen considerably in the last year. Pupils' attendance has improved in the last year, and is close to the most recent national average.

In lessons, pupils behave compliantly and generally attentively. Lessons proceed without disruption or undue delay. Staff are purposeful in seeking to make lessons increasingly interesting and motivating. Pupils say that they can work and learn without significant distraction. The most common recorded misbehaviour is not completing homework. Older students work well together and independently in social and study areas. The work seen by inspectors in pupils' books was well presented, showing pride and commitment. Pupils wear their uniforms smartly.

Around the building and the grounds, and on the way out of school, pupils behave safely and kindly to others. They do not require excessive supervision, typically

demonstrating self-awareness and discipline. They are happy, polite and helpful. They cooperatively apply safety rules, such as walking on the correct side of staircases during times of mass movement. There is some laughter and loud chatter at these times, but it is friendly and not unruly. Many pupils contribute, in diverse ways, to the school community and to widespread, often pupil-led, charitable efforts. On the day of this visit, pupils helped at the open evening in large numbers.

You and your senior leaders successfully lead the school as a stable, welcoming community. You know what the school does well and where the main improvements are still needed. There are times, however, where the school's self-evaluation is not sharp. The analysis is at times over-hesitant and uncertain. For example, leaders have identified correctly, through use of detailed data, that White British boys are disproportionately represented in exclusions and persistent absence. However, leaders have not analysed or conveyed closely enough the reasons for this. The school then cannot address some weaknesses, which, as in this case, persist. The previous inspection made a similar finding. Trustees, although active and engaged, are not quick enough in holding the school to account on such matters.

External support

The school works effectively and proactively with many partners, external agencies and organisations, including the local authority, other schools and the academy trust, to keep pupils safe and secure. There is a particularly strong and productive relationship with the attached police officer, which is reassuring and very supportive to pupils and staff.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that where weaknesses are identified, leaders are forthright in identifying and articulating the causes, so that they can be more sharply resolved. Further ensure that trustees hold leaders robustly to account in addressing weaknesses.
- Arrange that the written safeguarding records are typed or transferred to the school's electronic system straightaway when incidents occur, so that key information is immediately available there.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer or equivalent of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Havering. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Robin Hammerton
Ofsted Inspector