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EVERY CHILDHOOD IS WORTH FIGHTING FOR

Introduction

NSPCC Consultancy was commissioned by the Head Teacher, Mrs Lisa Littler to carry out an audit of safeguarding at Callands Community Primary School.

Objectives

To carry out a safeguarding audit to:

      a) Ensure that statutory requirements are met

      b) Identify best practice

      c) Identify areas for development

      d) Signpost to resources

Tasks carried out:

Virtual meetings with:

- Lisa Littler, Head teacher and DSL
- Claire Whittaker, Deputy Head Teacher and Deputy DSL
- Nigel Spencer, Chair of Governors, Safeguarding Governor
- Group of pupils from Years 3, 4 and 5

School Context

Callands Community Primary School is a two-form entry with 348 pupils on roll. 7% of children are on the vulnerable risk register and of these 57% are on the disadvantaged register and 43% are on the SEND register.

The context of the school has changed over the last couple of years. Social deprivation has doubled and the number of children with additional needs has also increased. The school has a positive reputation for working well with children who have SEND. Children with SEND mostly have cognition and learning needs, some pupils are on the Autistic Spectrum and others have social, emotional and mental health needs. The school has also admitted and continues to admit children from Hong Kong, due to a West Warrington settlement agreement.

The school's Ofsted inspection in March 2016 rated the school as outstanding. Safeguarding was found to be effective and inspectors said safeguarding was a high priority in the school.

Policy and procedures

The safeguarding policy was read in preparation for this audit but not formally reviewed. The safeguarding policy and a suite of other safeguarding related polices and documents are available on the school website. The policy is complaint with statutory duties and it is anticipated it will updated in time for September 1st 2021 to be in line with the changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education. A helpful summary of changes can be found at:

https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/schools/keeping-children-safe-in-education-caspar-briefing

During the pandemic, the school has regularly reviewed policies and procedures to keep children safe, including the remote education policy and daily absence policy. They continue to keep arrangements under review.

Leadership and Management of Safeguarding

- Mrs Lisa Littler, the headteacher, is the designated safeguarding lead. Miss Claire Whittaker, the deputy headteacher, is the deputy safeguarding lead. Mr Nigel Spencer, the Chair of Governors, is the safeguarding governor.
- The DSL and DDSL meet every week formally, and daily, informally to discuss safeguarding concerns
- SLT meets every 2 weeks where Team Around the Child discussions take place
- All of the SLT are trained as members of the Team Around the Child
- The Chair of Governors is also the safeguarding governor. In his 'day job' he is in school for half a day a week. He meets with the head teacher formally once a term, attends safeguarding training and checks the Single Central Record each half term.
- All Governors attend the annual safeguarding training. Those who are unable to attend complete e learning.
- The DSL and DDSL do not split the role: They both carry out all aspects of the DSL role.

School Environment, Ethos and Pastoral Care

- Relationships between staff and pupils at Callands Community Primary School is extremely strong. Relationships with parents are good and have developed further during the pandemic. Parents have been positive about the delivery on live lessons.
- Arrangements during different phases of the pandemic have focussed on keeping children safe and engaged in education. This continues to be a priority as restrictions and government guidance changes.
- The site is secure and there is a robust signing in system for visitors.
- There are displays around the school relating to safeguarding, online safety and mental health.
- Children say that access to the building is secure and this helps them to feel safe.
- The children said that teachers help to keep them safe. They also said that the class bubbles had kept them safe during the pandemic.

- Worry boxes are available for children to post concerns, which they can also do anonymously if they wish.
- The school has the Stonewall Silver Award and is working towards the Gold Award.
- The school has a 'Serenity Room' providing a sensory/calming environment for pupils.

Child Protection Procedures

- The school uses an electronic management information system to record safeguarding concerns. The system brings together safeguarding and SEND which, as the DDSL is also the SENDCo, helps to consolidate information in one place.
- All staff are trained to use the system and log concerns directly. Staff can log any concern, however small. Staff are encouraged to talk to the DSL and DDSL as well as logging a concern if there is a serious cause for concern.
- The DSL and DDSL will respond to each concern.
- Staff receive feedback on a need to know basis.
- The midday supervisors use a paper based system, because of access to and confidence around using IT. This facilitates discussion between midday supervisors and teachers and teaching assistants at the end of lunchtime, so concerns are not missed.
- Children know that they can talk to a teacher about concerns and they are confident that teachers "would sort it out".

DSL Training

- The headteacher completed DSL training in September 2020 and the deputy DSL completed DSL training in January 2021 with the NSPCC. The DSL, deputy DSL and Safeguarding Governor have all completed Safer Recruitment Training.
- The DSL and DDSL are well informed and keep themselves up to date, so that they are able to update staff as required.
- They make use of national sources of information, such as NSPCC alerts, DfE alerts and other organisations such as National Online Safety. There is not a local DSL network.
- There is minimal support on offer from the LA, but the school does not buy into the service as they feel they are able to get support and advice elsewhere.
- The DSL and DDSL support each other. The DDSL knows she can get support from other head teachers if the Head of Callands is not available.
- There is no formal professional supervision. The DSL and DDSL feel that all staff 'look out' for each other but there are no formal structures in place.

Staff Training and Induction

- A whole day is dedicated to safeguarding training at the beginning of the school year.

- All staff attend, including those who are contracted to work at the school, e.g. kitchen and cleaning staff.
- There has been a strong emphasis on online safety training during the pandemic.
- There are plans to revisit FGM and Prevent training in the Autumn term 2021.
- The Head Teacher delivers the training using tasks and activities to keep the content fresh and relevant. There are creative tasks and an element of competition to keep everyone engaged
- Mixed groups are used for discussion activities so that staff can work with those in different roles.
- All new staff have a safeguarding induction with the DSL and DDSL. They are not permitted to take up their role until this is completed.

Multi-agency working

- Callands Community Primary School works with multiple agencies to ensure all children and families have support at the earliest point possible. Examples of agencies that we work with are: Early Help, MASH, Social Services, Addvanced Solutions, St. Joseph's Family Centre, IDVA, Child Bereavement UK, the attendance officer, Golden Gates Housing.
- The school has a close relationship with the LA in terms of MASH referrals and statutory meetings.
- There are frustrations in working with children's social care especially when there is a lack of continuity, making it difficult to build relationships.
- The school has good links with the PSCOs and has worked with them on online safety and other areas of pupil safety.
- Early Help is embedded into the school's approach to safeguarding and SEND. Teachers are confident about speaking to parents about Early Help and for some parents it is more acceptable coming from a class teacher rather than senior leaders, and it helps them to engage. However, some parents prefer to have engagement from senior leaders. It is evident that school staff know their children and families well so can bespoke an approach that will be effective.
- Parents know that concerns will be taken seriously and that there is a consistent approach throughout the school.

Safeguarding in the Curriculum and Online Safety

- There is online safety information on the school website including e safety support for parents, such as links to Parent Zone and CEOP. The school has the 360° safe Quality Mark.
- The PSHE/SRE curriculum includes work on physical safety, online safety, personal safety making informed choices, managing stress, media and body image.
- Lessons are delivered in discrete lessons every week and the school also takes part in awareness days and weeks such as kindness day and anti-bullying week.
- All staff deliver sex education as it is important that children see staff as trusted adults.

- Children said they are taught about online safety, how to use equipment safely and how to keep safe and have good friends.

Summary

- Callands Community Primary School has a very strong ethos to support safeguarding.
- The school takes its safeguarding responsibilities very seriously and keeps procedures under constant review. This has been especially apparent during the last 18 months, with changes to remote education procedures to reflect changes in Covid related restrictions.
- Procedures are in place which are robust, clearly communicated and understood.
- Termly questionnaires show that pupils feel safe and happy at school.
- The leadership and management of safeguarding embed the 'safeguarding is everyone's responsibility' message and the school's leaders are mindful of new and emerging issues which impact on children and families.
- Despite very good practice in safeguarding there is still a desire to continuously improve and embed procedures. The school leadership avoids complacency and has a healthy regard to "it could happen here" type thinking.
- Although safeguarding is seen as everyone's responsibility, the DSL and DDSL hold and contain a lot. They support each other and are supported by the Chair of Governors. All the support structures are informal. The emotional impact of safeguarding, particularly in the current context should not be underestimated or accepted as part of the role.

Recommendations and Resources

- Consider some 'advanced' training for the DSL/DDSL such as these courses:

  https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/training/child-protection-supervision-skills

  https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/training/trauma-child-brain-development

  https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/training/child-protection-safeguarding-trainers

- Whole school/SLT training on safeguarding supervision such as:
  https://www.miandsafeguardingtraining.co.uk/motivational-interviewing-and-safe-guarding-training-courses-safeguarding-supervision-for-schools-and-colleges.html

- There are some organisations who offer professional supervision for DSLs such as:
  https://safeguarding.network/supervision/
  https://www.sosafeguarding.co.uk/supervision-for-dsls

- Use learning from recent serious case reviews to inform training and reflection. See
  https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/case-reviews/recently-published-case-reviews

- Use relationships with local community organisations to explore issues from outside of families which impact on safeguarding, i.e. contextual safeguarding. An exercise to identify 'hotspots' near and around school could give some insight into some contextual factors.
- There are a lot of resources and ideas for schools on the Contextual Safeguarding Network https://csnetwork.org.uk/

- Build evidence base against the forthcoming Ofsted framework to show how the school:
    - always acts in the best interests of children, pupils and students to protect them online and offline, including when they are receiving remote education or self-isolating due to COVID-19
    - identify children, pupils and students who may need early help, and who are at risk of harm or have been harmed. This can include, but is not limited to, neglect, abuse (including by their peers), grooming or exploitation
    - secure the help that children, pupils and students need, and if required, referring in a timely way to those who have the expertise to help
    - manage safe recruitment and allegations about adults who may be a risk to children, pupils, students and vulnerable adults. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-eif/schools-inspection-handbook-for-september-2021#safeguarding

- NSPCC Consultancy offers a policy health check for the safer recruitment policy and HR safeguarding consultancy and training. More details can be provided on request.