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Mr Chris Drew
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Drew

Additional monitoring inspection of Khalsa Secondary Academy

Following my inspection with Harry Ingham, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 23 and 24 March 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken to provide education to all pupils during the current circumstances.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 (2) of the Education Act 2005 (as amended) and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for visiting schools while routine inspections remain temporarily suspended. It was additional to the usual monitoring process for schools that are judged require special measures.

Following changes to government guidance and the imposition of COVID-19 (coronavirus) lockdown restrictions, most of Ofsted's monitoring inspections are being carried out remotely. This inspection, however, took place on site due to significant concerns about safeguarding and leadership and management.

The inspection took place because the school was judged to require special measures at its previous section 5 inspection(s). The school was last inspected in December 2019.

Having considered all the evidence and taking into account the impact of COVID-19 on the school, I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action to provide education in the current circumstances.

Safeguarding is not effective.

Leaders and those responsible for governance should take further action to:

- promote a fully vigilant culture of safeguarding in the school, by ensuring that senior leaders and trustees follow statutory guidance comprehensively when dealing with any allegations about a member of staff.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, there have been several changes to senior leadership. This includes the headteacher and two assistant headteachers, who are new to the school, and a newly appointed designated safeguarding lead (DSL). Trustees have appointed a new chair of trustees and safeguarding trustee, as well as other new trustees. Other trustee roles have been reorganised. A revised scheme of delegation has been introduced.
- Nearly all pupils were educated at home when the school was closed to most pupils at the start of the spring term.
- At the time of this inspection, nearly all pupils were back attending on site.

Main findings

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have worked to improve the curriculum despite the disruptions caused by the pandemic. They have particularly focused on broadening and deepening the education that pupils receive in Years 7 to 9. Staff have valued working with other schools in the trust to support these improvements. Leaders have provided useful training for teachers about how to ensure that pupils learn well.
- Since implementing the new curriculum from September 2020, teachers have wisely adapted the order in which the topics are taught. Subject leaders carefully considered which topics would suit being learned at home, and which should be taught later when pupils returned to school. Pupils are positive about the quality of remote education the school has provided. They told inspectors that the feedback they received from teachers has helped them to keep learning throughout the pandemic.
- Teachers are currently checking what pupils have learned this term, rightly using what they find out to make subsequent adaptations to the curriculum. For example, teachers are prioritising the most important knowledge that Year 11 and Year 13 pupils need to learn in order to be ready for their next stages in education.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have started to improve pupils' literacy across the school. They have purchased books more suited to pupils' needs and interests. They check more closely that what pupils read is of high quality and from a range of genres. This is working more effectively with younger pupils, as more younger than older pupils told us that they read for pleasure.

- Leaders have rightly prioritised supporting vulnerable pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Throughout the pandemic, staff have used information about the individual needs of pupils to adapt their work, whether they are learning at home or at school.
- Senior leaders and representatives of the trust have monitored the quality of education throughout the pandemic. They have used feedback from pupils, parents and carers, and staff to improve the use of technology to support pupils' learning.
- Safeguarding is not effective because a rigorous and comprehensive culture of safeguarding does not extend to the most senior leaders and trustees. This is because they do not fully understand and follow statutory guidance when a concern is raised about a member of staff. During the inspection, some leaders and trustees expressed disagreement with the requirements of the statutory guidance. This puts pupils at risk. Consequently, despite substantial improvements to much of the school's work to safeguard pupils, pupils remain unsafe.
- Leaders and staff have worked hard to improve several aspects of safeguarding since the previous inspection. They have benefited from useful advice from the safeguarding trustee and external advisers. The DSL oversees a larger, better trained and well-organised safeguarding team. The safeguarding policy is in line with statutory guidance. Recruitment checks are carried out promptly and are all recorded correctly on the single central register. Staff now understand how to recognise when pupils need help and how to act if they have a concern about a pupil. Records of concerns about pupils are kept securely and systematically. This enables safeguarding leaders to act decisively should a pupil need additional help from external agencies.
- Leaders have worked hard and effectively to improve staff knowledge of the risks that pupils face in their local communities. This allows leaders to confidently educate pupils in how to deal with any safeguarding issues they might experience. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They feel that pupils of different faiths mix together well and that everyone is treated with respect. Pupils know whom to talk to if they are worried about anything, and they trust that staff will listen to them.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted on site due to concerns about safeguarding and leadership and management. Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other leaders, trustees, representatives of the local authority, pupils and staff to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown and to check the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures. We also spoke to the trust's director of school improvement on the telephone.

Inspectors toured the school, checked the single central register and scrutinised a range of documents relating to the curriculum and to safeguarding. Inspectors considered the 86 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Parent View, and the 52 responses to the confidential staff survey.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of The Khalsa Academies Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Buckinghamshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Old
Her Majesty's Inspector