Dealing with specific safeguarding issues

1. Issues arising from a case study

1 September 2014
Case study approach

Leadership and management

- Inspectors **should** consider the, ‘effectiveness with which a school identifies any pupils who may be at risk, using a case study approach based on concerns about individual pupils that may have originated either inside or outside the school’. [School inspection handbook, para 157]

Behaviour and safety

- ‘Inspectors **must** look at a small sample of case studies in order to evaluate the experience of particular individuals and groups, such as pupils for whom referrals have been made to the local authority (checking how the referral was made and the thoroughness of the follow-up), disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, looked after children and those with mental health needs’ [School inspection handbook, para 171]

Achievement of pupils

- Inspectors **must** take account of ‘case studies of individual pupils’ [School inspection handbook, para 195]
What could it tell you?

1. Spend a few minutes reflecting on what you would be looking for when you undertake a case study with a safeguarding focus
It could tell you

- that the school has a clear policy and understanding of the importance of recording
- the level of knowledge and understanding staff in relation to child protection
- the effectiveness of the designated safeguarding lead
- the quality of recording
- how well individual issues are recorded and pieced together
- the timeliness of recording
- the timeliness of the school’s actions in relation to safeguarding concerns
- the tenacity of the school in following up concerns
Possible case(s) to select

Some examples

a) Case study where there have been child abuse concerns and where a referral was made to the local authority

b) Case study relating to a young person who is subject of a child protection plan

c) Case study where there have been safeguarding concerns e.g. a child who goes missing, concerns about FGM, concerns where a child has not attended school for some time but is still on the attendance register
Points to explore re (b) and (c)

- Quality of engagement of the school with other agencies, e.g. attendance at conferences, reviews, professional meetings.
- The efforts school has made to seek advice from relevant agencies
- The quality of records and information provided by the school
- Other potential issues relating to the young person e.g. exclusion, non-attendance and the action the school has taken in response
- Action the school has taken if the young person is regularly absent from school
- Quality of engagement with parents / carers
Particular points to consider

- ‘Written records are made in a timely way and held securely where adults working with children are concerned about their safety or welfare. Those records are shared appropriately where necessary and with the necessary consent.’ [Briefing, para 14]

- Any child protection and/or safeguarding concerns are immediately shared with the local authority in the area where the concerned professional is working and a record of that referral is retained. There is evidence that the referral has been followed up quickly and that action has been taken to protect the child from further harm. [para 15]

- There is a written plan in place with clear and agreed procedures to protect a child or young person. For children who are the subject of a child protection plan or who are looked after, the plan identifies the help that the child should receive and the action to be taken if a professional working with the child has further concerns or information to report. [para 17]
Serious Case Reviews (SCR)

- Poor recording by agencies (including schools) is a key issue in SCRs.
- Serious case reviews stress the importance of ensuring that practitioners’ observations are clearly recorded.
- A common finding is that none of the main agencies had a complete picture of the child’s family or a full record of the concerns. Holistic assessments of risk were not made routinely in these cases and agencies tended to respond reactively to each situation rather than having seen the whole context.
- For example in the SCR relating to one school it was clear that staff had concerns but these were not reported / recorded early enough.
- In the SCR relating to another records were not detailed enough and were not contemporaneous or in some instances missing. Not all the information on record was included in the CP forms.
Practice suggestions

- Try and do the case study before interviewing designated safeguarding lead

- Key aspects of safeguarding that this may help inform but which may need to be informed by other evidence:
  - the quality of training of staff, including the designated safeguarding lead
  - the timeliness and appropriateness of the school’s actions in response to safeguarding concerns.
What is expected of a school’s DSL

- Designated safeguarding lead should refer all cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children’s social care [KCSIE p. 42]

- Designated safeguarding lead training should include the ability to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals [KCSIE p. 43]
Good practice

- The school should maintain accurate and secure child protection (CP) records
- Not all CP information results in a referral - small pieces of information may not be significant on their own, but can help to contribute to a 'jigsaw' picture of abuse.
- Records need to be as accurate and objective as possible
- Disclosures should include a record of: what the child said; any injury; date, time and context; speed of response; on-going support
- Any assessment should be supported by evidence
- The school should be clear about who makes records, where they are kept, who has access to them, who has the responsibility for reviewing and collating them
Dealing with specific safeguarding issues

2. Exploring attendance and safeguarding

1 September 2014
If you or a team member is exploring attendance and its relationship with safeguarding

1. What is some of the key evidence you would look at?

2. What are some of the key questions you might want to ask?
Asking some key questions

- How (and how quickly) is absence from school identified and followed up (particularly for potentially vulnerable young people)
- Action in relation to missing pupils or persistent absentees.
- How registration is managed and, if applicable, the steps taken by schools in following up pupils that leave the site after registering.
- Contact with parents and relevant agencies.
- Procedures and practice regarding taking pupils off roll.
- Track through some examples e.g. pupils taken off roll, those with long-term absence, pupils subject to a child protection plan, looked after children, those at risk of going missing, those on part-time timetables.
- Absence which may raise questions e.g. re FGM, forced marriage.
- Attendance of pupils at off-site provision.
Dealing with specific safeguarding issues

3. Dealing with a safeguarding disclosure

1 September 2014
Receiving a disclosure

- Stop other activity and focus on what you are being told, or have just seen
- Allow the child to make the disclosure at their own pace / in their own way
- Avoid interrupting, except to clarify what the child is saying
- Do not probe for any information the child does not volunteer
- Do not promise confidentiality and do not ask leading questions
- Try and establish if there is an immediate risk
- Gather enough basic information (e.g. name, address, dob)
Receiving a disclosure (cont’d)

- It may be appropriate to discuss action with an appropriate member of staff.
- Contact Ofsted 0300 123 4234.
- Take notes of what has been said, what you have heard or seen and what you did. Keep the notes (dated, timed and signed) taken at the time, without amendment, omission or addition.
- If a concern is about a member of Ofsted staff ask to speak with a senior member of staff in ARC or in HR (inform your line manager when you can).
Responding to disclosure

- A direct disclosure must be followed up.
- If the discussion was at your instigation, you should have made it clear at the outset that you may not be able to promise confidentiality. Even if the child has raised her concerns before you had a chance to make this point, do not promise confidentiality.
- Record what the young person is saying without asking leading questions. Try to establish if there is an immediate risk to the young person or her mother.
- Discuss the matter with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and obtain basic information about the child. The school should make the referral to the LA. Establish before contacting the ARC – whether the school is willing to do this.
- Gather any information likely to be of use when contacting the ARC team. If the provider has agreed to make a referral to the LA, ARC can check subsequently if a referral was made. Call ARC and report back to the DSL on action you have taken.
Writing the report

- Include:
  - ‘Concerns raised by some pupils/a pupil/some parents/one parent during the inspection are being examined by the appropriate bodies.’

[Briefing, para 56]
Dealing with specific safeguarding issues

4. Inspecting a school when there is a known safeguarding issue about a member of staff

1 September 2014
Points to bear in mind

- Gather as much as possible the relevant information pre-inspection; consider what PIP holds, the most recent report on the local services and the LSCB (SIF), what other local intelligence Ofsted may hold (e.g. Senior HMI social care, Serious Incident notification), local media.

- Schools and academies are required to refer to the LADO where there are concerns of harm or potential harm caused by an adult in a position of responsibility and trust in respect of a child.

- Exercise care in what is written and, if necessary, seek advice (see briefing, paras 50 ff).
Students who may be vulnerable

- Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board (Apr 2014) completed a SCR into the tragic death of Frances Andrade, violinist who committed suicide after giving evidence at the trial of a teacher and his wife who worked at Chetham’s Music School, Manchester. The teacher and his wife were subsequently convicted of the historical sexual abuse of Frances Andrade.

Dealing with specific safeguarding issues

5. Quality assuring an inspection where the inspection team have information about safeguarding concerns about the school

1 September 2014
Prior to the inspection

- A careful read of complaints-related information and media coverage and local information from the LA about their involvement.

- Read and evaluate the joining instructions.

- Brief telephone conversation with LI (a) ensure she has all the relevant pre-inspection information; (b) discussion as to how to ensure team members manage interviews in a sensitive way given the media coverage.
During the inspection

- Initial brief meeting with HT followed later by more in-depth meeting. Meetings ensured the HT understood the fact that the inspection team were exploring issues which gave rise to the complaint.

- Observing a meeting between a TI and senior staff about safeguarding.

- Observing other TI’s engagement with and interviewing of staff.

- Discussion with the LI about her QA of the work of inspectors.

- Observing an interview with pupils.
During the inspection

- Scrutiny of the evidence base with a particular focus on behaviour and safety and the leadership and management of safeguarding.
- Scrutiny of the evidence base to see how the issues relating to the complaint were recorded.
- Feedback to individual TIs.
- Observation of the team meeting at the end of day 1.
- Feedback to the LI.
- (Day 2) telephone discussion with the HT.
Key questions

- Have issues relating to the complaint informed inspection trails and have the team gathered and recorded sufficient evidence re. same?
- Are team members focussed sufficiently well on the key trails – what is the quality of their evidence?
- Has there been sufficient depth and breadth in the focus on safeguarding and in particular on bullying and the academy’s support for vulnerable pupils?
- Is there sufficient emphasis on the relationship and overlap between behaviour and safety (e.g. bullying)?
- Has there been sufficient evidence gathered from pupils and, where possible, parents?
- Has the LI following the guidance on complaints?
Key questions

- Has the team investigated documentary evidence well enough e.g. regarding bullying?
- What is the quality of discussion and evidence at the team meeting?
- Have emerging issues/judgements been shared?
- Are there issues regarding evidence - do leaders feel that emerging judgements are based on the secure evidence so far?
- Are leaders clear what further evidence is needed - have they been given opportunities to present further evidence?
- Can any trails be closed down or minimised and what needs further exploration on day 2?
Post inspection (if time permits!)

- Telephone call with the HT (Day 2) picking up on any issues or developments from day 1.

- Brief telephone call with LI (during the writing day).

- Evaluation of the evidence base and draft report with a particular focus on safeguarding.

- Feedback to the LI.
Dealing with specific safeguarding issues

6. Further help and support

1 September 2014
Other sources of support / help

- Ofstedlearning portal
  - 4 e-books with more to follow – three in particular: (a) Missing children and children at risk of sexual exploitation; (b) female genital mutilation; (c) understanding autism.

- Regional duty desk and/or other arrangements e.g. availability of a Senior HMI (not necessarily a schools SHMI).

- Each region has a representative on Ofsted’s Safeguarding Group (this is a cross-remit group which meets monthly, chaired by Debbie Jones).