

Desktop Review of Safeguarding and Governance in the Plymouth CAST Academies

1. Background

- 1.1 “During the focused review the CEO and Trust Board could not provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate that safeguarding arrangements were rigorously monitored or that they knew such arrangements were robustly applied in all Trust Schools.” OFSTED 22 November 2017.
- 1.2 Following the OFSTED review:
 - (a) All Plymouth CAST Academies have received Safeguarding Audits by the Area Advisers.
 - (b) A Safeguarding Review was undertaken by Ambitions Academies Trust.
 - (c) Between March 2016 and July 2017 OFSTED have inspected 28 Academies and found “Safeguarding to be effective” in all but 1 Academy.
 - (d) The Board has approved the Safeguarding Strategy and related appendices for full implementation from 1 September 2017
- 1.3 In the last academic year the Board has not received an update specifically focused on “Safeguarding and Governance”. This research attempts to address this issue.

2. Research Methodology

- 2.1 Helen Moram, Office Manager sent an email request on 6 July 2017, with a follow-up reminder on 13 July 2017, to all Clerks requesting the following information by Tuesday 18 July 2017:
*“During the summer, Maria Edwards, Board Director with Responsibility for Safeguarding is undertaking a Governance Safeguarding Review across Plymouth CAST for the academic year 2016/2017. In order to assist with this review, please can you send the following documents to Maria.Edwards@plymouthCAST.org.uk before **Tuesday 18 July 2017**:*
 - (1) All LGB agendas (not sub-committees), and
 - (2) All written reports on Safeguarding presented to the LGB prepared by the Head/DSL and/or the Safeguarding Governor, between 1 September 2016 and 17 July 2017.”
- 2.2 26 out of a possible 35 responses were received, including 1 with wholly corrupted documents and 1 with partially corrupted documents. (Note: 1 response covers the two academies in a Federation.)
- 3.3 The quality of the responses varied with some clerks providing detailed agendas and a wide range of reports and/or minutes which included sections on Safeguarding, to some clerks simply providing very basic agendas from which it was difficult to determine whether Safeguarding was discussed at LGB meetings. One clerk reported that all Safeguarding reports are dealt with under Confidential Matters and papers can only be viewed by visiting the Academy.
- 3.4 The analysis of the forms reviewed the following areas:
 - Safeguarding is a standing item or included in other items eg Head's report on all LGB agendas
 - Heads (or DSLs) provide a minimum 2 reports per year which includes data on SG
 - Heads or DSL provide an annual report on SG to Governors
 - SG Governor carries out a minimum 1 audit per year
 - SG Governor provides an annual report to LGB

3. Summary of Findings

- 3.1 There is no consistent approach taken by Clerks or LGBs in respect of Safeguarding across Plymouth CAST.
- 3.2 The Number of LGB meetings varies from 3 to 11 with the norm being 6 or 7.
- 3.3 11 of the 27 academies had Safeguarding as a Standing item and/or received updates at all LGB regular (as opposed to extraordinary meetings).

- 3.4 Heads usually provide updates on safeguarding as part of their written reports. The regularity of these reports varies eg every meeting, half-termly and termly, with some heads providing an annual Safeguarding Report. The quality of the reports varies from brief updates confirming safeguarding is effective to detailed updates on recruitment, SCR checks; staff training and summary data on referrals and multi-agency working.
- 3.5 9 of the Governors with Special Responsibility for Safeguarding undertook at least 1 audit/visit per year, with 6 undertaking 2 or more audit/visits. These visits were recorded with written reports presented at LGB meetings.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The importance placed on Safeguarding needs to be demonstrated by all LGBs in a consistent manner with clear reporting, monitoring and evaluation based on guidance from central Plymouth CAST as outlined in the Safeguarding Strategy approved by the Plymouth CAST Board.

5. Recommendations for consideration by the Plymouth CAST Executive Management Team

- 5.1 All LGBs are required to have Safeguarding clearly identified as a Standing Item on agendas.
- 5.2 At the first LGB meeting of the new academic year 2017/18 and subsequent academic years:
- (a) The Governor with responsibility for Safeguarding is confirmed in role and together with the Chair of the LGB sign the Statement of Intent approved by the Plymouth CAST Board on 17 May 2017.
 - (b) All governors must sign to confirm they have read KCSIE (2016 or later version), with the record to be kept by the Clerk to the LGB.
 - (c) Governors to receive a copy of the Safeguarding Monitoring and Evaluation Cycle approved by the Plymouth CAST Board on 17 May 2017 (see Appendix A below).
- 5.3 Future LGB meetings to include receipt of the following documents in accordance with the safeguarding Monitoring and Evaluation Cycle:
- SG1 Safeguarding Self-Assessment
 - SG2 Annual Safeguarding Report to the Governing Body and Plymouth CAST
 - SG3 Governor Checklist for Safeguarding
 - SG4 Safeguarding Termly Summary Support for LGB and Plymouth CAST – Referrals and Multi-Agency Working.
- 5.4 All Governors with Responsibility for Safeguarding to undertake a minimum 1 visit/audit of Safeguarding/year and provide a written report for discussion at the LGB.
- 5.5 The job descriptions for every Clerk to the LGB to be amended to include a specific responsibility in respect of Safeguarding namely:
- “To ensure Safeguarding is a Standing item on every LGB agenda; full compliance with the Safeguarding Monitoring and Evaluation Cycle approved by the Plymouth CAST Board and all related documents are sent to Central Plymouth CAST”
- 5.6 The monitoring of compliance by the Clerks to be undertaken by the Plymouth CAST Central Office Manager and reported to the Executive Management Team.

Desktop Review undertaken by:
Maria Edwards
Director with Special Responsibility for Safeguarding
17 August 2017

APPENDIX A - Extract from the Safeguarding Strategy Part B Section 6 Monitoring and Evaluation

Autumn Term			
Type of Monitoring	Date to be completed	Evaluation	Further actions
Schools complete SG2	October 31st	Reviewed by Area DSL Meeting	Formation of school safeguarding action plans
Governors complete SG3	15 th December	Schools to review	Will form the basis of Governor Training
Area Adviser Attendance report	15 th December	Analysis by Area Advisers and Head of School Improvement	Dependent on analysis
Schools complete SG4	15 th December	Extrapolated to look at trust wide safeguarding data	Information shared with schools to benchmark and with the board
Spring Term			
Staff, Pupils & Parents surveys	31 st March	Data analysed at Trust and School level	Dependant on analysis
Area Adviser Attendance report	31 st March	Analysis by Area Advisers and Head of School Improvement	Dependent on analysis
Schools complete SG4	31 st March	Extrapolated to look at trust wide safeguarding data	Information shared with schools to benchmark and with the board
Summer Term			
Schools complete SG1	1 st June	Report completed for the board to outline Trust and/or school areas of concern.	Board to commission either external or internal safeguarding health checks. Training needs to be determined.
Area Adviser Attendance report	1 st July	Analysis by Area Advisers and Head of School Improvement	Dependent on analysis
Schools complete SG4	1 st July	Extrapolated to look at trust wide safeguarding data	Information shared with schools to benchmark and with the board