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Final Report Summary: School Safeguarding Audit 2013-15
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Methodology

Governing Bodies and Headteachers need to ensure that their safeguarding responsibilities in accordance with sections 157 + 175 of the Education Act 2002 are met. Local Authorities and LSCBs have a responsibility to monitor the compliance of maintained schools with the legislation and the statutory guidance *'Keeping Children Safe in Education'*.

Nationally, this is most commonly done by requesting schools submit a completed safeguarding self-review tool. The self-review seeks to ensure that schools are supported in the process of safeguarding and have access to relevant and valid information regarding their statutory safeguarding functions. The tool assists schools to examine the current safeguarding arrangements in place and to identify areas which may require further development. A completed audit tool with evidence of actions undertaken in response to the review is a valuable source of evidence to demonstrate to the Governing Body and for the purpose of Ofsted inspection how the school is meeting statutory requirements for safeguarding children.

The findings are based on schools' self-evaluation scores using Ofsted grades 1 – 4. Schools are asked to document the evidence used to inform the conclusions that they have reached and develop an action plan to address any weaknesses identified in the process of completing the self-review.

'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2014) sets out the responsibilities of schools and further education colleges to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. For the purposes of this self review maintained schools and academies were asked to take part.

A similar audit of Norfolk schools' safeguarding procedures was completed by the Quality Assurance Team during 2010 and 2011. A total of 382 schools made a return, equating to an 89% return rate of the 431 schools that were contacted.

Key Themes

- For the purpose of this audit, 423 Norfolk schools were contacted during the Academic Year 2013-14 and in the Autumn Term 2015 to request that they complete and submit the self-review tool.
- A total of 380 schools (including Federations) made a return using the self review document; equating to a 90% return rate. This represents a 1% increase in the percentage of schools making a return in comparison with the QA Audit undertaken in 2010-11.
- The majority of schools provided comprehensive evidence in the commentary section of the self-assessment tool to demonstrate and support the associated grades that they have submitted. The areas of good practice identified by schools are included in the commentary of the full report.
- The number of schools failing to provide ratings for some sections of the review tool has dropped by 6% since the previous audit in 2010-11.

What does the evidence tell us about school practice?

- The data was compared with the similar QA audit completed in 2010-11. It is positive to note that there appears to have been a growth in confidence amongst schools in all areas of the self-assessment. Schools in this audit have consistently provided more positive assessments of their safeguarding practice in comparison with the 2010-11 audit with an average 10.7% increase in schools rating themselves as either 'good' or 'outstanding' for each field.
- In only 0.2% of all responses did a school identify that existing arrangements were inadequate; the majority of grade 4 assessments related to staff knowledge and awareness of particular issues e.g. private fostering, FGM, Forced Marriage.
- The sample size of the audit and the general level of detail and thoughtfulness of the data submitted provides the LA and the NSCB with a positive indication of the central importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Norfolk Schools.
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Is the evidence supported by data from Ofsted Inspections?

This audit provides important evidence of how the LA is monitoring schools' compliance with statutory requirements for safeguarding. The methodology for obtaining this evidence via self-assessment is valid, in accordance with other LA practice and understandable given the resources available to carry out the audit. It can be argued however that the evidence from the audit will not, on its own, provide independent evaluation and assurance regarding the quality of day to day practice in accordance with school policy and procedures. The findings of this audit have therefore been compared with the outcomes of Ofsted inspections of Norfolk schools during the Academic Year 2013-2014.

- The data shows that 98% of the schools inspected during this period were judged to meet statutory requirements for safeguarding. This data supports the findings of this audit that indicates the vast majority of schools feel that they not only meet but exceed statutory requirements for safeguarding in line with Ofsted expectations and best practice guidance.
- Of the 145 Norfolk schools inspected during this period, 16 were judged as 'Inadequate'. The inspection reports for these 16 schools were reviewed in order to identify those instances where the safeguarding arrangements in place had contributed to the inadequate judgement.
- In the 129 schools that were judged to be 'Outstanding', 'Good' or 'Requires Improvement', safeguarding arrangements were judged to meet statutory requirements. This equates to 90% of the Schools inspected during this period.
- Weaknesses in the safeguarding arrangements contributed to an inadequate judgement in 3 of the 16 schools. In one case this related specifically to the failure to evidence required safer recruitment checks on the Single Central Record. In the remaining two cases, the failure was symptomatic of broader failures in leadership and management and the ability to keep children safe. This equates to 2% of the schools inspected during this period.
- In the other 13 cases where schools had been judged to be 'Inadequate', the inspections reports clearly stated that the schools met statutory requirements for safeguarding. In some of these reports, safeguarding arrangements were deemed to be 'good', 'rigorous' or 'effective' and pupil perceptions of safety were identified as a strength of the school.