Report to the East Sussex LSCB Steering Group

Report title and author:

School Self-Assessment Safeguarding Audit 2017/18
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Presented to the meeting on:

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Report Headlines:

- Positive engagement with the audit from maintained and academy schools
- Strong links being made and an improving picture of engagement with independent schools.
- Record keeping is an area requiring further development
- Online safety remains an area for development
- Guidance on Domestic Violence/Abuse (DV/A) requires updating
- Schools are confident with Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Discussion or decisions required:

- Recommendations for the updating of guidance:
  - Domestic Violence and Abuse Protocol for Schools
  - Keeping Records of Child Protection and Welfare Concerns guidance
- Strategies to support schools with engaging parents in online safety
- Engagement with independent schools
- The timetable for next year’s audit: issue at the same time or later in the year?

Voice of the Child:

Voice of the child is a discrete area of the audit and the results across all schools is reassuring with 100% of schools reporting that children know how to report concerns and can identify a trusted adult.
1. **Introduction**

1.1 The safeguarding audit toolkit was issued to all schools (maintained and independent), academies, free schools and colleges within East Sussex during September 2017. For ease of reading within this document, all these establishments will be covered by the term school. Similarly, where governing bodies are cited, this should also be understood to include trustee boards or management committees.

2. **Audit purpose**

2.2 The purpose of the safeguarding audit toolkit is threefold:

2.3 First and foremost it provides schools with a robust framework against which they can complete a self-evaluation of practice within their individual setting. This process allows schools to identify areas of good practice and action plan against any areas requiring further development. The audit tool and action plan provides schools with the means to report comprehensively to their governing body, and the governing body can then provide critical challenge to the school, to ensure the accuracy and veracity of their self-assessment. Ongoing scrutiny, throughout the year, by the safeguarding governor can be supported by using the governor checklist which has been produced alongside the audit tool.

2.4 Secondly, as well as providing reassurance to schools and governing bodies individually, around good practice and compliancy of safeguarding, the collation of all the audits across the county allows oversight by the LSCB about safeguarding within schools.

2.5 Thirdly, the audit data should inform the SLES/LSCB training offer as well as further support to schools provided through the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) network, the safeguarding newsletter and other offers of guidance and advice.

3. **Format of the audit toolkit**

3.1 This current audit is the fourth occasion that East Sussex schools have been provided with an audit tool. In common with previous audits, it has been developed to cover all aspects of statutory guidance and local good practice, with a total of 153 separate statements divided into seven specific sections. Previous versions have been formatted as a Word document, with schools required to give a red, amber, green (RAG) rating to a number of different standards. The current version is an Excel document and each standard must be given a yes or no response. This binary system creates greater clarity of each schools position, by not having the middle ground of an amber response. Any negative response should then feature within the action plan to develop this area to a positive position.

4. **Engagement from schools**

4.1 Schools have engaged positively with the audit process this year, with 98% of maintained schools and academies submitting an audit return.

4.2 Engagement with independent schools has been less comprehensive. In some part this is due to there not being any definitive database available of fee paying schools in the county. In September 2017 SLES contacted the 26 schools, which were known at this time. By the deadline for the audit process 13 of these schools had submitted an audit to SLES. Since this time SLES has now identified a further 7 Independent schools and made contact with them.
4.3. The current audit returns for independent schools then are 19 out of 33 schools. Of the schools yet to return an audit SLES has had positive contact with 4 of them: there are 10 schools yet to engage with SLES on the subject of the audit.

4.4. Within the county there is an Independent Schools Safeguarding Group (ISSG), which meets regularly. This is a self-run group, but their meetings are facilitated by the LSCB and more recently SLES as well. Feedback from this group is that some of the schools have not completed the audit because they found the timing of it inconvenient, preferring to complete it during the summer terms, as opposed to the autumn. In other cases the schools commission audits from elsewhere or complete an audit, of a different format, for their own proprietary bodies.

5. **Good practice**

5.1. The audit returns demonstrated a level of self-challenge from schools, in that areas in need of further development were identified. However it is important to highlight too, those areas where schools report positively, of which there are many.

5.2. Below is a selection of key areas where 99-100% of schools reported positively:

- The school has identified an appropriate member of the leadership team as the designated safeguarding lead (DSL)
- The DSL takes an active role and holds overall responsibility for safeguarding, and safeguarding related continuing professional development of staff, in the school.
- The DSL is allowed sufficient time, autonomy and resources to attend Child Protection Conferences and multi-agency meetings.
- The governing body has a designated governor for safeguarding and child protection.
- The safeguarding and child protection policy is reflective of current local and national guidance or legislation.
- There is a clear induction process, which includes safeguarding, for all staff.
- Children in the school know how to report concerns and can identify a trusted adult.
- Staff are able to recognise the indicators of children at risk of child sexual exploitation and the importance of raising concerns at an early stage.
- The school is compliant with the East Sussex Local Safeguarding Children Board (ESLSCB) Keeping Records of Child Protection and Welfare Concerns guidance (2017) in respect of record keeping.
- The school has undergone appropriate whole school safeguarding training that includes online safety and whistle-blowing procedures, and is kept regularly updated.
- All designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) have received DSL initial or refresher training within the two year requirement.
- At least one member of all recruitment panels have undergone safer recruitment training.
- The single central record covers the information set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2016).

6. **Framework for results**

6.1. As previously stated the audit tool consists of 153 separate statements, so the raw data generated from this is vast. To focus the findings for this report they will be presented using the LSCB priorities as a framework:
- Safeguarding in schools
- Online safety
- Domestic Abuse
- Child Sexual Exploitation

6.2. In addition to these priorities there are also some headlines on voice of the child as well.

6.3. The percentages below express the number of schools which reported positively to these statements, 10% being equal to approximately twenty schools. Within the heading of safeguarding in schools there are some notable results from across the seven areas of the audit, which do not fit with the other discrete LSCB priorities. In the first instance all of these results are presented with some commentary, with further context and interpretation being provided in a subsequent section of this report.

7. Safeguarding in schools

7.1.  
- 95%: Child welfare files show regular review and analysis.
- 68%: All governors must undergo specific online awareness training on the role of governors in safeguarding at least every two years.
- 57%: The Headteacher and Chair of Governors have attended training on managing allegations against staff.
- 88%: The governing body minutes are able to evidence critical challenge of the school by governors, in respect to all safeguarding reports presented by the DSL.

7.2. The following three results, around behaviour, relate only to secondary schools, being more significant within this phase than across all schools. As such these percentages are based upon secondary schools only and equates to six schools responding negatively against each statement. It should be noted that it is not the same six schools for each of the three points.

7.3.  
- 78%: The behaviour policy specifies the school's approach to physical intervention and the use of reasonable force.
- 78%: Where the school has identified they may use positive handling, relevant staff have received appropriate training in relation to behaviour risk assessment, de-escalation and positive handling.
- 78%: Where the school has identified they may use positive handling there is an appropriate secure method of recording incidents of restraint.

8. Commentary

8.1. The fact that 5% of schools have stated that their welfare files do not show regular review is not especially significant in that this equates to around only ten schools. It does though present an issue with the internal validity of this particular aspect of the audit in that 100% of schools stated that they follow the ESLSCB record keeping guidance, and reviewing files is a feature of this.
8.2. The numbers for governors not having completed online training are of more significance, but currently this is not a statutory requirement, so schools and governors are not obliged to follow this recommendation or timescale.

8.3. The managing allegations training is not a requirement of statutory guidance, but locally in East Sussex it was determined that the headteacher and chair of governors in all schools should complete this training. In response to this aspect of the audit additional dates for this training were scheduled and schools are steadily completing this.

8.4. Critical challenge is a core purpose of any governing body. The evidence for this needs to be recorded in the minutes of meetings. In discussion with governors it is often apparent that this challenge exists, but this is not accurately reflected in the minutes. This is also one of the evidence trails which Ofsted will follow during in an inspection.

8.5. The secondary results, relating to physical interventions and positive handling of pupils has identified the need for schools to ensure that policy, practice and the training of personnel are all up to date and consistent. Equally though this has identified that although the recording of restraints is detailed in the East Sussex Positive Handling/Use of Reasonable Force Guidance Spring 2016, it does not feature in Keeping Records of Child Protection and Welfare Concerns guidance (2017), and perhaps should do so, even if only as a reference to the first guidance document.

9. **Online safety**

9.1. - 60%: The DSL has undertaken a self-review of the school's current online safety practice.
- 76%: The school has an adequate risk assessment and associated online monitoring system in place, appropriate to the schools’ needs and requirements, both for pupil and staff online activity.
- 76%: The DSL utilises online monitoring results to inform safeguarding decisions within the school.
- 97%: The school works with parents on supporting pupils’ safe use of social media, including issues around online bullying, sexting, and online grooming.

10. **Commentary**

10.1. All schools have appropriate systems to filter and monitor the internet use of children, but a reduced number are using the results of this monitoring to inform their day to day practice or long-term strategy. Schools are confident about how online safety features within the curriculum, in terms of teaching children to stay safe, and this is corroborated by pupil voice. The statement of whether the school works with parents on supporting pupils’ safe use of social media etc, is also positive. However, the audit has not captured the fact that whilst most schools are making efforts to work with parents, most schools struggle to engage them in a meaningful way around online safety. Despite organising various events, these are rarely well attended, or fail to reach the families most in need of guidance and support. What the audit has revealed though is that a number of schools have not fully considered their approach
to online safety in a system wide manner, and if they were to do so this may reveal further opportunities to develop practice, including parental engagement.

11. **Domestic Abuse**

11.1.
- 84%: The school is aware of the East Sussex Domestic Violence and Abuse Protocol for Schools and is able to support pupils and families who are affected by domestic abuse.

12. **Commentary**

12.1. The schools which said they were unaware of this guidance have since accessed it and shared it as necessary with staff. The guidance rightly identifies the possibility of abuse occurring within teenage relationships, but as it was produced in 2016 it does not reference or take account of more recent practice or guidance such as *sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges May 2018.*

13. **Child Sexual Exploitation**

13.1.
- 100%: Staff are able to recognise the indicators of children at risk of child sexual exploitation and the importance of raising concerns at an early stage.

14. **Commentary**

14.1. 100% of schools responded positively to this statement around CSE, which reflects their level of confidence with this specific safeguarding issue. Within DSL training and newsletters DSLs are now being advised to consider CSE as just one aspect of the wider criminal exploitation of children, notably modern slavery and county lines. This should feature as a statement in the next audit, to determine how much this message has been shared and embedded with the wider workforce.

15. **Voice of the child**

15.1.
- 99%: The school takes account of the voice of the child.
- 100%: The school teaches children about safeguarding.
- 99%: The curriculum promotes resilience and awareness in children.
- 100%: Children in the school know how to report concerns and can identify a trusted adult.
- 99%: Children understand what bullying is and how the school will deal with it.

16. **Commentary**

16.1. The results within this section are positive and schools routinely use ‘pupil voice’ across all aspects of their school improvement planning. When SLES complete a safeguarding practice review at a school, a pupil focus group are spoken with. This academic year seventeen schools have taken part in a safeguarding practice review, with four more planned before July 2018. In all seventeen reviews pupils spoke positively about their schools, stating that they feel safe there, that bullying is not an issue and that they could identify a trusted adult, if they needed to share anything of concern.
SLES actions

17.1. There is the potential with any self-assessment audit that it becomes a tick box exercise completed in isolation, which provides a singular perspective on a snapshot in time, though this is not to suggest that schools have approached it in such a way. Schools are encouraged to have their audit signed off by the governing body and the action plan which is formed from the audit should equally be shared with them too. To ensure that the audit becomes a working document and part of a conversation across all schools, SLES have completed a number of actions throughout the academic year which have allowed for further reflection on the audit process and outcomes and these have supported the sharing of good practice.

17.2.  
- Reported to school governors, in writing and directly at governor forums  
- Reported to headteachers, in writing and directly at specific briefings  
- Reported to independent schools directly at a network meeting  
- Facilitated peer challenge through the DSL network meetings  
- Completed quality assurance visits to a selection of schools  
- Super network: DSL meeting (planned for 5th and 6th July 2018)

Governor forums

18.1. To support governing bodies with critical challenge they were presented with a detailed report of key findings. As well as providing commentary on these points the report also suggested some key questions which governors could pose to their respective schools. In addition to this written report SLES managers also attended a series of governor forums where aspects of the report were discussed. Beyond this report governors have also been directed to the safeguarding governor checklist which mirrors the audit but has additional notes with suggestions of evidence to look for and signposting towards further support. To further develop the capacity of safeguarding governors and to provide ongoing support SLES have worked with governor services to develop a network for safeguarding governors. This newly formed group have met for the first time in term 5 with further meetings planned for the next academic year.

Headteacher briefings

19.1. SLES managers have presented aspects of the audit results to primary school headteachers and then secondary and special school headteachers as well, at specific briefings. These meetings provided the opportunity for headteachers to reflect upon their own schools but to also share good practice and to learn from other settings.

Independent school safeguarding network

20.1. SLES managers were invited to present at the independent school network meeting in March 2018. At this meeting analysis of the results of just the independent schools was shared, although interestingly this broadly mirrored the results across all
schools. As well as discussing the results, signposting towards sources of support was shared.

21. **Peer challenge at DSL networks**

21.1. Across the county there are 12 DSL networks which meet at least three times a year. Attendance at these is generally positive, although not all schools attend all meetings. There is a common agenda across all the networks and during the term 5 and 6 meetings this included an activity which allowed for peer challenge. Within this activity DSLs were expected to discuss the following statements from the safeguarding audit:

21.2. - All welfare concern forms have been reviewed, actioned where necessary, and signed off, by the DSL.
- A clear review cycle is in place for all child welfare files.
- Child welfare files show regular review and analysis.
- Safe Practice and the Culture of Safety
- Staff are able to recognise the indicators of children at risk of child sexual exploitation and the importance of raising concerns at an early stage.
- The school is aware of the East Sussex Domestic Violence and Abuse Protocol for Schools and is able to support pupils and families who are affected by domestic abuse.
- The school identifies children at risk of the issues highlighted within Annex A of KCSIE 2016

21.3. In terms of peer challenge DSLs had to think about their evidence base for each statement, what the impact of their work was, and what next in terms of action planning. DSLs engaged really well with this activity and gave positive feedback about how useful and helpful it was.

21.4. More specific feedback was provided about the record keeping guidance, with a request for this to be updated to include more detail for the growing number of schools which are using commercial electronic record keeping systems. When discussing the domestic violence protocol it emerged that a number of schools had difficulty with locating this document on the LSCB website, and then further commented on it now requiring updating.

25. **Quality assurance visits**

25.1. To enhance the validity of schools self-assessment and to strengthen the reporting of the audit, this year SLES have undertaken a number of quality assurance visits to a random selection of schools. These visits are ongoing but it is intended to see approximately thirty schools before the end of the school year. To look at the entire audit with this number of schools would be unachievable, so instead the following statements were selected, which include two of the LSCB priorities as well as record keeping.
25.2. There is a clear induction process, which includes safeguarding, for all staff. 
- Staff are able to recognise the indicators of children at risk of child sexual exploitation and the importance of raising concerns at an early stage.
- The school is aware of the East Sussex Domestic Violence and Abuse Protocol.
- Child welfare files show regular review and analysis.
- The school has effective mechanisms in place to follow up outcomes of referrals to social care, as identified in KCSiE(2016).
- Individual child welfare files contain written plans which identify the help the child should receive and how concerns can be escalated.

25.3. These quality assurance visits have in general validated that schools are identifying children with concerns, specifically around CSE and DV/A. With regards to record keeping, the visits have highlighted inconsistent interpretations of the record keeping guidance. This raises the question as to whether the guidance requires revision and whether it was effectively shared with schools in September 2017.

26. **Super network**

26.1. As a culmination of all the work which has been completed around the audit this year SLES are planning two super network events in July. These will bring together the 12 smaller networks, allowing for greater sharing of learning across the entire county, with the following agenda:

26.2. 
- Strategies to review and develop online safety in your school.
- Best practice for identifying domestic violence/abuse and how this may impact on children.
- Developing the mental health practice in your school.
- Updates to Keeping Children Safe in Education: implications for September 2018.

26.3. This agenda for these meetings was set before the quality assurance visits had started so for this reason does not include record keeping as an area of input. It is planned to cover record keeping extensively in the terms 1 and 2 DSL network meetings at the start of the next academic year.

27. **Conclusion**

27.1. Engagement with the audit process is markedly improved this year and this puts schools and SLES in a strong position to develop further sharing of good practice through partnership working. Although the engagement with the audit has been good, some of the results do raise questions as to how well schools are using some of the guidance which is available, or indeed how well that guidance has been shared. The DSL network meetings for terms 1 and 2 next year will be used to address this issue.

27.2. Beyond the sharing of guidance there are also questions around the content of some of the guidance and the extent to which it can be easily interpreted and used by
schools. By virtue of the statutory guidance for schools: Keeping Children Safe in Education being updated for September 2018, all guidance will need to be reviewed, to ensure that it is in line with this new document. This review and updating of documents will also need to include some of the requests for clarity which have emerged from the audit process, specifically the record keeping, positive handling and domestic violence guidance. Updates to Keeping Children Safe in Education is an item for the super network meetings in July, and reference to these other documents can be made within this.

27.3. In-school practice around online safety is generally positive, in that there are filtering systems in place and children are taught to keep themselves safe online. There is a good local offer of multiagency training from the LSCB, with the ‘Safeguarding in a Digital World’ package, but this is seemingly not yet having the impact with supporting schools to engage with parents as well as they would like to. Schools have been directed to an online tool to support them with their self-review of their online practice and further input will be provided at the super networks in July. However, the resource for supporting schools directly with their online practice in East Sussex is limited and currently some of the policy work around this area is commissioned out to Kent County Council.

27.4. The audit results suggest that schools feel confident with identifying CSE as an issue, which should be expected given that this is not a new area of focus. The audit will need to be updated though to capture the extent to which schools feel confident around identifying the wider issues of child criminal exploitation, specifically modern slavery and county lines. Along with this amendment, the audit will also be updated to include any changes in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

27.5. To maintain the momentum of the current positive engagement with the audit process it will be issued once again to schools during the next academic year. However, in response to feedback from a number of schools, including independents, and to improve the engagement from this sector, consideration will be given to issuing the audit later in the year, during the spring or summer terms.