

Safeguarding Review: Larwood School (Stevenage and Dunstable sites)

Introduction

This safeguarding review for Larwood School provides an overview of the school's safeguarding arrangements across both sites, Stevenage and Dunstable, based on evidence gathered during a focused review conducted on 2nd and 3rd March 2026. The findings reflect a snapshot of safeguarding practices and culture observed at the time of the review. It is important to note that this review does not replace leaders' (including trustees') responsibility for carrying out their own robust, regular, and systematic checks of safeguarding provision and its impact. Furthermore, this review is not equivalent to an Ofsted judgement on the effectiveness of safeguarding.

The review was conducted by Ruchi Datta, a Primary and Special School Effectiveness Adviser from HFL Education, at the request of the school to explore the culture of safeguarding. The purpose of the review was not to determine whether safeguarding is effective but to provide insights into the safeguarding culture through a range of activities, as outlined below. This review aligns with the guidance set out in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE, 2025).

Larwood School is a primary special school located in Stevenage, with a new smaller site in Dunstable very recently established. The school was last inspected by Ofsted on 9th November 2022, and the safeguarding arrangements were judged to be effective.

The review involved meetings with senior leaders, the link safeguarding trustee, safeguarding leads, staff, and students. A range of documentation, including policies related to safeguarding, was scrutinised to inform the findings. While every effort has been made to provide a thorough review, it is acknowledged that no single review can cover all aspects of safeguarding in depth. This report aims to support leaders in reflecting on current practices and identifying areas for further development.

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ENVIRONMENT

What are we looking for?

When reviewing the environment, the focus is on assessing the school's physical and cultural safeguarding practices. This may include the security of entry points, the effectiveness of sign-in procedures, and the visibility and clarity of visitor identification systems. Observations should ensure that students are appropriately supervised, relationships between staff and students are respectful, and the overall atmosphere is calm and purposeful. Key considerations may include the sharing of safeguarding information with visitors, site security during and outside school hours.

How was this assessed:

- Observations during entry and sign-in to the school.
- Observations whilst touring the school, transitions and break times.
- Observations of relationships between staff and students.

Judgement: Substantial Evidence with Areas for Development

The bullet points provided under the judgement are illustrative examples and do not represent an exhaustive summary of the specific issues or strengths identified within the school.

1. Insufficient Evidence

Evidence is too limited to make a judgement, e.g. Key safeguarding aspects, such as site security or supervision, have not been reviewed.

2. Limited Evidence with Areas for Development

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- Limited evidence indicates significant areas for development in safeguarding practices, such as inconsistent visitor sign-in procedures, inadequate supervision, or unclear safeguarding information for visitors.
- Some security measures may be in place, but there are clear gaps, e.g., gates left unlocked or poor visitor identification.

3. Limited Evidence with Positive Indicators

- Limited evidence suggests that some safeguarding measures are sound, e.g., visitor sign-in procedures are generally followed, and students are mostly supervised.
- Initial indicators show the environment is calm and purposeful, but there may be inconsistencies, such as occasional gaps in supervision or clarity in safeguarding communication.
- Registers are usually taken, but actions for missing students may lack rigour.

4. Substantial Evidence with Areas for Development

- Substantial evidence demonstrates many effective safeguarding practices, such as secure entry points, supervised entrances, consistent sign-in processes, and safeguarding information shared with visitors.
- However, some areas for improvement remain, such as inconsistent supervision during breaks, or minor issues with fire door access or site security.
- Relationships between staff and students are generally respectful, but isolated areas of improvement may exist.

5. Substantial Evidence with Positive Indicators

- Substantial evidence indicates a strong safeguarding culture, with effective and secure entry points, clear visitor sign-in procedures, consistent supervision, and robust safeguarding communication with visitors.
- The environment is calm and purposeful, with clear, respectful relationships between staff and students.
- Registers are consistently taken, and robust processes are in place for addressing missing students.
- Fire doors are clear, and the site is fully secure at all times.

Notes on judgement:

The safeguarding culture across the school is strong and clearly embedded in daily practice. Staff consistently demonstrate a strong duty of care and a nurturing, calm approach when interacting with pupils.

The environment across both sites feels purposeful and safe, with well-established routines and transitions. Pupils describe adults as supportive and responsive, and know which adults they can go to when they feel unsafe.

Zones and staggered breaks at lunchtime and positive play activities contribute to purposeful social times. Staff supervision is strong and purposeful.

Visitors are asked to sign in, and are given clear badges (colour-coded) determining their level of access on site. A comprehensive safeguarding leaflet is handed to visitors.

Both sites demonstrate good security: fobbed doors once pupils are in, CCTV in corridors and large spaces at the larger site, and appropriate monitoring of behaviour **incidents**.

Safe spaces (known as 'free space') are without doors and located next to appropriately

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used behaviour suites.

Staff know pupils' backgrounds well and are alert to vulnerabilities. Visuals to support emotional regulation strategies are used across the school.

Areas for development:

On the main site, IDs should be routinely checked and internal door supervision should be given consideration at the start of the day to ensure that access is secure.

SAFEGUARDING TEAM

When reviewing the safeguarding team, the focus is on the effectiveness of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and their deputies (dDSLs) in promoting a robust safeguarding culture. Key areas may include the rationale behind their selection, their training, and the time allocated for safeguarding responsibilities. Evidence is sought on how the team collaborates, triages cases, and ensures follow-ups. The DSL's availability to staff, their engagement with other leaders (e.g., pastoral and curriculum leads), and their role in supporting student welfare and safeguarding through the curriculum are vital indicators. Additionally, the visibility of the safeguarding team through the school website, child protection policies, and posters is considered, alongside the availability of supervision and support for team members. Compliance with *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSiE) 2025 is central to the evaluation.

How was this assessed:

- Observations whilst touring the school for evidence of posters and communication
- Discussion with DSL and review of team members
- Discussion with other stakeholders such as governor(s), staff and students

Judgement: Substantial Evidence with Positive Indicators

The bullet points provided under the judgement are illustrative examples and do not represent an exhaustive summary of the specific issues or strengths identified within the school.

	1. Insufficient Evidence
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The safeguarding team's roles and responsibilities have not been reviewed, or there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement.
	2. Limited Evidence with Areas for Development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited evidence suggests key areas for improvement, such as insufficient training, lack of collaboration, or inadequate time allocated for DSL/dDSL responsibilities.• Visibility of the team and safeguarding practices in policies or the school environment is unclear or inconsistent.
	3. Limited Evidence with Positive Indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited evidence suggests that the DSL/dDSL(s) are appropriately trained and available to staff, and there are some positive practices in case management and team collaboration.• Some areas for development are identified, such as delays in CP file transfers or insufficient visibility of the safeguarding team within the school.
	4. Substantial Evidence with Areas for Development

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- Substantial evidence demonstrates effective safeguarding practices, such as well-trained DSL/dDSL(s), regular team collaboration, and clear processes for managing and transferring CP files.
- Some minor areas for improvement remain, such as inconsistent communication with curriculum or pastoral leads or limited support and supervision for the DSL team.

5. Substantial Evidence with Positive Indicators

- Substantial evidence indicates a highly effective safeguarding team with clear roles, consistent collaboration, and robust safeguarding processes.
- The DSL/dDSL(s) are well-trained, available to staff, and proactive in working with curriculum and pastoral leads to promote safeguarding across the school.
- Safeguarding information is clearly communicated via policies, websites, and posters, and the team is well-supported with supervision and resources.

Notes on judgement:

DSL and dDSLs are clearly identifiable, knowledgeable and well-respected by staff. Posters around school highlight the team to staff, students and visitors. Members of the team are appropriately selected and trained.

DSL team meets twice weekly to review cases, concerns and themes across both sites, ensuring a proactive and joined-up approach and rigour in monitoring and triaging cases.

Staff consistently express confidence in the DSL team, noting timely responses, strong oversight, and robust monitoring of CPOMS.

Safeguarding presence is visible across the school day, including at transitions.

Clear allocation of lead responsibility for different cases is in place.

Safety Support Plans and risk assessments are well used and updated in light of pupil need.

Staff feel supported and regularly receive safeguarding updates and scenarios.

Areas for development:

Deputy DSLs should ensure timely updating of actions on the shared spreadsheet.

CONCERNS REGARDING STAFF

What are we looking for?

When reviewing concerns regarding staff, the focus is on how allegations and low-level concerns are managed, recorded, and addressed in line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2024*. This may include evaluating whether referrals to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) are made promptly and appropriately, and how low-level concerns are stored and monitored. Evidence may be sought on how the school fosters a culture of openness, ensuring staff feel confident in sharing concerns, including through reminders of the whistleblowing policy. The review may also assess how regularly staff are reminded of their responsibilities and the systems in place to safeguard against inappropriate behaviour.

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How was this assessed:

- Discussion with staff
- Review of Code of Conduct/Staff Behaviour Policy and other policy documents
- Discussion with DSL

Judgement: Substantial Evidence with Areas for Development

The bullet points provided under the judgement are illustrative examples and do not represent an exhaustive summary of the specific issues or strengths identified within the school.

1. Insufficient Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This area has not been reviewed, or there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about how concerns regarding staff are managed.
2. Limited Evidence with Areas for Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited evidence indicates that referrals to the LADO or recording of low-level concerns are inconsistent or poorly managed. • There may be a lack of clear communication or reminders about the whistleblowing policy, and staff may feel unsupported in raising concerns.
3. Limited Evidence with Positive Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited evidence suggests that referrals to the LADO are made in a timely manner and low-level concerns are recorded, but there may be inconsistencies in storage or follow-up. • Staff are generally aware of the whistleblowing policy, but reminders may not be frequent or robust enough.
4. Substantial Evidence with Areas for Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantial evidence demonstrates that referrals to the LADO are consistently made appropriately, low-level concerns are securely recorded, and staff are reminded of the whistleblowing policy regularly. • Some minor areas for improvement remain, such as enhancing staff confidence in raising concerns or streamlining recording systems.
5. Substantial Evidence with Positive Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantial evidence indicates a robust and effective system for managing concerns about staff. • Referrals to the LADO are made promptly, low-level concerns are securely stored and monitored, and staff are consistently reminded of and confident in using the whistleblowing policy. • A culture of openness and trust is evident, ensuring safeguarding concerns are addressed appropriately and in line with KCSiE 2025.

Notes on judgement:

Staff are aware of the whistleblowing procedures and understand how to raise concerns. The DSL issues reminders in training that “it could happen here”.

Code of Conduct is referenced clearly in induction.

Staff describe feeling confident to raise concerns and trust that leaders would act.

Areas for development:

Streamlining systems through the introduction of Staff Safe will be a positive

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development in securely logging, storing and monitoring low-level concerns regarding staff.

TRAINING

What are we looking for?

When reviewing safeguarding training, the focus is on how staff are trained, inducted, and kept up to date with current safeguarding requirements, as outlined in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSiE) 2025. This may include evaluating the processes for initial and ongoing training, ensuring all staff have read and understood KCSiE Part 1, and assessing specific training on topics like online safety, recognising abuse and neglect, and responding to domestic abuse and child-on-child abuse. Training records are reviewed to ensure they are comprehensive, up to date, and overseen effectively. The review may also consider how training equips staff to recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns confidently and in a timely manner.

How was this assessed:

- Discussion with DSL/Safeguarding Team
- Discussion with staff
- Review of SCR, training records and certificates

Judgement: Substantial Evidence with Areas for Development

The bullet points provided under the judgement are illustrative examples and do not represent an exhaustive summary of the specific issues or strengths identified within the school.

	1. Insufficient Evidence
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training records have not been reviewed, or there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the quality or consistency of safeguarding training.
	2. Limited Evidence with Areas for Development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited evidence suggests gaps in training processes or records, such as incomplete documentation, inconsistent induction for new staff, or insufficient updates on safeguarding issues.• There may be a lack of specific training on critical topics like online safety, domestic abuse, or child-on-child abuse.
	3. Limited Evidence with Positive Indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited evidence shows that most staff have been trained and understand safeguarding responsibilities, including reading KCSiE Part 1.• Some areas for development may include ensuring training records are more comprehensive or increasing the frequency of specific safeguarding updates.
	4. Substantial Evidence with Areas for Development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Substantial evidence indicates that staff are regularly trained, inducted effectively, and updated on safeguarding issues in a timely manner.• Training covers key topics, such as recognising abuse, online safety, and domestic abuse, but minor gaps or inconsistencies may exist, such as in record-keeping or refresher training.
	5. Substantial Evidence with Positive Indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Substantial evidence demonstrates a robust and comprehensive approach to safeguarding training.

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- All staff are well-trained, understand KCSiE Part 1, and receive regular updates on safeguarding issues.
- Training records are well-maintained and show evidence of consistent induction processes and timely updates for all staff, including specific training on online safety, domestic abuse, and child-on-child abuse.
- Staff are confident in recognising and responding to safeguarding concerns, reflecting a strong safeguarding culture.

Notes on judgement:

Induction includes safeguarding, CPOMS training, Prevent training, code of conduct, scenario-based learning, and time to observe strong practice.

All new staff undertake immediate safeguarding training (1st–2nd day).

Ongoing safeguarding updates take place on alternate Tuesdays, plus daily reflections at the end of each day on both sites support additional safeguarding reminders.

Some staff demonstrate understanding of KCSiE 2025 updates.

Training covers complex safeguarding themes, including harmful sexual behaviour.

Staff across both sites confidently give examples of situations where they have recognised and responded appropriately to safeguarding concerns.

Areas for development:

Training records, KCSiE confirmations and induction completions could be more effectively monitored using a central system alongside the single central record.

GOVERNANCE

What are we looking for?

When reviewing governance in safeguarding, the focus is on the involvement and oversight provided by the governing body, particularly the safeguarding link governor. Evidence is sought on the training undertaken by governors, their understanding of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSiE) 2025, and their awareness of safeguarding policies, procedures, and local multi-agency arrangements. Key considerations may include how safeguarding is discussed in meetings, the quality of reporting, and the extent to which governors challenge and verify safeguarding data. The review may also evaluate how governors ensure compliance with legal obligations, such as the Human Rights Act and Equality Act, and their role in areas such as recruitment, safeguarding for alternative provision, and preventing peer-on-peer abuse. Governors' visibility, such as being named on the website, and the transparency of their oversight processes, may also be assessed.

How was this assessed:

- Discussion with Safeguarding Link Governor
- Exploration of meetings between DSL and link Governor
- Exploration of reports and findings from link Governor with FGB

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Judgement: Limited Evidence with Positive Indicators

The bullet points provided under the judgement are illustrative examples and do not represent an exhaustive summary of the specific issues or strengths identified within the school.

1. Insufficient Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The governance of safeguarding has not been reviewed, or there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement.
2. Limited Evidence with Areas for Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited evidence suggests governors have basic safeguarding knowledge but lack training or a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.• Safeguarding is inconsistently discussed at meetings, and there is limited evidence of challenge or verification of safeguarding data.• Awareness of key risks, local safeguarding arrangements, or legal obligations is underdeveloped.
3. Limited Evidence with Positive Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited evidence shows that governors, including the safeguarding link governor, are trained and engaged in safeguarding, with policies and reports reviewed periodically.• Some areas for development may include strengthening oversight processes, improving data validation, or increasing awareness of local safeguarding risks and obligations under KCSiE 2025.
4. Substantial Evidence with Areas for Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Substantial evidence demonstrates governors' active engagement in safeguarding, with regular training, robust discussions in meetings, and oversight of safeguarding policies and reports.• Governors are aware of legal obligations, local risks, and multi-agency arrangements but may need to enhance specific areas, such as data validation processes or QA of alternative provision.
5. Substantial Evidence with Positive Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Substantial evidence indicates that governors, particularly the safeguarding link governor, are highly effective in their oversight of safeguarding.• They are well-trained, fully understand KCSiE 2024, and actively challenge and validate safeguarding data and processes.• Safeguarding is a priority in governance meetings, with clear reporting from the DSL and proactive measures taken to address risks and legal obligations.• Governors effectively oversee recruitment processes, QA of alternative provision, and the school's approach to local risks and peer-on-peer abuse, ensuring a robust safeguarding culture.

Notes on judgement:

The safeguarding link trustee last carried out a visit in June 2025. This was an audit, involving questions for the DSL and staff, and includes a check of the SCR. This is carried out annually.

Trustees receive information from the headteacher on behaviour, attendance and case complexities and ask questions to clarify information received.

Trustees have undertaken safeguarding training including safer recruitment.

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Areas for development:

The safeguarding link trustee should consider visiting both sites termly and gain up-to-date knowledge on information regarding any alternative provision in place, effectiveness of PSHE/RSE provision and oversight of SCR review monitoring processes. The DSL could support to define a clear focus for each visit, with completion of a structured visit report following each visit to feed back to the board.

Trustees should ensure diligence when ratifying policy updates, to ensure accuracy. For example, Code of Conduct references KCSiE 2019 and 2023 despite being approved in April 2025.

The Trust should replace KCSiE 2024 with KCSiE 2025 on the policy section of the Trust website.

REPORTING AND RECORDING

What are we looking for?

When reviewing reporting and recording practices, the focus is on the systems and processes in place to ensure that safeguarding concerns are promptly and accurately documented and acted upon. Evidence is sought on staff confidence in responding to disclosures, reporting concerns, and escalating issues if external agencies fail to act. The review considers the consistency of reporting systems, whether concerns are logged in detail with clear chronologies, and whether information is securely stored. Key areas may include how child-on-child abuse is reported and addressed, how the child's wishes are taken into account, and the training provided to ensure consistent practice. Multi-agency collaboration and adherence to *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSiE) 2024 standards for information sharing and record-keeping are also key considerations.

How was this assessed:

- Discussion with DSL/Safeguarding Team
- Review of Safeguarding records and reporting systems
- Discussion with staff

Judgement: Substantial Evidence with Areas for Development

The bullet points provided under the judgement are illustrative examples and do not represent an exhaustive summary of the specific issues or strengths identified within the school.

1. Insufficient Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reporting and recording practices have not been reviewed, or there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement.
2. Limited Evidence with Areas for Development

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- Limited evidence indicates inconsistent or unclear reporting and recording practices. Staff may lack confidence or training in responding to disclosures or reporting concerns.
- Concerns may not be escalated appropriately, and records may lack detail, organisation, or secure storage.

3. Limited Evidence with Positive Indicators

- Limited evidence shows that staff generally understand how to report concerns and use the school's systems, but some inconsistencies exist in practice or confidence levels.
- Records are maintained securely, and concerns are logged with some detail, but chronologies or follow-ups may be incomplete.

4. Substantial Evidence with Areas for Development

- Substantial evidence demonstrates clear and consistent reporting and recording systems, such as CPOMS or secure paper files.
- Staff are confident and trained in responding to disclosures, and records include comprehensive summaries and detailed chronologies.
- Some areas for improvement may include ensuring consistent follow-ups or better integration of attendance and child-on-child concerns into safeguarding systems.

5. Substantial Evidence with Positive Indicators

- Substantial evidence indicates robust reporting and recording practices. All staff are confident in responding to disclosures, reporting concerns, and escalating issues when necessary.
- Records are secure, well-organised, and include comprehensive summaries, chronologies, and follow-ups, with actions clearly documented and tracked.
- Systems effectively integrate attendance concerns, child-on-child abuse, and multi-agency collaboration, ensuring all actions align with KCSiE 2024 standards.
- The child's wishes and feelings are consistently considered, demonstrating a child-centred approach to safeguarding.

Notes on judgement:

CPOMS is comprehensive and regularly monitored by the DSL team. DSLs oversee safeguarding tagging, ensuring accuracy.

Twice-weekly DSL team meetings review logged concerns and decisions.

CCC (Children Causing Concern) documents are shared weekly and provide clear oversight across both sites.

Staff know how to report concerns and have confidence in system responsiveness.

Clear rationale is added to CPOMS entries.

Attendance concerns are incorporated with safeguarding, and attendance data is monitored closely.

Areas for development:

Ensure teachers add follow-up actions to CPOMS, including comprehensive information regarding communication with parents/carers related to concerns

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ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

What are we looking for?

When reviewing the use of Alternative Provision (AP), the focus is on how schools ensure the safety, attendance, and educational progress of students placed in AP settings. Evidence is sought on the number of students attending, how attendance is monitored daily, and the steps taken if a student does not attend. The review may consider whether the school has visited the AP, agreed on the curriculum, and ensured safeguarding arrangements are robust. It also examines how students are supported in accessing AP and how the success of the placement is evaluated. Adherence to *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSiE) 2024 standards is central to the review.

How was this assessed: N/A

- Discussion with DSL
- Discussion with Safeguarding link governor

Judgement: N/A

The bullet points provided under the judgement are illustrative examples and do not represent an exhaustive summary of the specific issues or strengths identified within the school.

1. Insufficient Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The use of Alternative Provision has not been reviewed, or there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the arrangements in place.
2. Limited Evidence with Areas for Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited evidence indicates gaps in oversight, such as unclear processes for monitoring attendance, lack of visits to the AP, or inadequate checks on safeguarding arrangements.• Support for students attending AP may be inconsistent, and there may be no clear method for evaluating the success of placements.
3. Limited Evidence with Positive Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited evidence shows that the school monitors attendance and has some engagement with the AP, such as agreeing on the curriculum or supporting students to attend.• Safeguarding arrangements may need further scrutiny, or success evaluations may be informal or inconsistent.
4. Substantial Evidence with Areas for Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Substantial evidence demonstrates that the school has effective processes for daily attendance monitoring, curriculum agreements, and regular communication with the AP.• Visits to the AP and safeguarding checks are in place, but minor areas for improvement may include more robust success evaluations or additional support for students.
5. Substantial Evidence with Positive Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Substantial evidence indicates robust oversight of AP placements. The school monitors attendance daily, promptly addresses non-attendance, and regularly visits the AP to ensure quality.• Safeguarding arrangements align with KCSiE 2024, and the curriculum is agreed upon and tailored to student needs.• Students are well-supported in accessing AP, and the success of placements is regularly and effectively evaluated.

Notes on judgement:

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N/A

The school has strong systems in place to ensure that pupils not in school full-time are still educated by school staff remotely.

SINGLE CENTRAL RECORD

What are we looking for?

When reviewing the Single Central Record (SCR), the focus is on how the school maintains, audits, and ensures the accuracy and compliance of this essential safeguarding document. Key areas may include who oversees and audits the SCR, how it is maintained, and whether it meets the minimum statutory requirements outlined in *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2024*. The review may consider password protection, processes for adding and removing staff, the handling of leavers, checks for overseas staff, and the inclusion of governors and trustees. Evidence is sought on whether checks such as DBS, barred lists, Section 128 directions, and identity verification are completed and recorded correctly. Training for those responsible for the SCR and the frequency of audits are also evaluated.

How was this assessed:

- Discussion with those who manage the SCR
- Discussion with the DSL
- Review of the SCR

Judgement: Substantial Evidence with Positive Indicators

The bullet points provided under the judgement are illustrative examples and do not represent an exhaustive summary of the specific issues or strengths identified within the school.

1. Insufficient Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The SCR has not been reviewed, or there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about its accuracy, compliance, or maintenance.
2. Limited Evidence with Areas for Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited evidence indicates gaps in oversight or maintenance of the SCR, such as incomplete records, missing checks, or inadequate password protection.• Processes for adding or removing staff are unclear, and training or auditing of the SCR may be inconsistent.
3. Limited Evidence with Positive Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited evidence shows that the SCR is generally compliant with statutory requirements, with most checks completed and recorded.• Areas for development may include improving audit processes, addressing occasional gaps in information, or strengthening training for those responsible.
4. Substantial Evidence with Areas for Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Substantial evidence demonstrates effective oversight and maintenance of the SCR, with regular audits and robust processes for adding and removing staff.• All statutory checks are completed and recorded, but minor improvements may be needed, such as ensuring governors and trustees are consistently included or refining overseas check processes.

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5. Substantial Evidence with Positive Indicators

- Substantial evidence indicates the SCR is maintained to a high standard, with all statutory checks completed, recorded, and regularly audited.
- Processes for managing leavers, adding new starters, and ensuring password protection are robust, and governors or trustees are consistently included.
- Those overseeing the SCR are well-trained, and the record aligns fully with KCSiE 2025 requirements, reflecting a strong safeguarding culture.

Notes on judgement:

The SCR is password protected, well maintained and compliant, meeting all statutory requirements.

The HR lead has appropriate training and accesses ongoing CPD through relevant publications and can access advice from a HR compliance advisory company.

An HR audit was completed last year, following a request by Trustees.

Areas for development:

Check that the online SCR automatically removes personal details from those archived after 6 years, to comply with GDPR storage limitation principles, or whether this must be carried out manually by the HR lead.

PERSONNEL FILES

What are we looking for?

When reviewing personnel files, the focus is on ensuring they are well-organised, compliant with *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSiE) 2024, and contain all required checks and documentation. Evidence may be sought on who oversees the files and ensures their accuracy and completeness. Key checks may include photographic ID, mental and physical fitness, right to work in the UK, overseas checks (where applicable), professional qualifications, childcare disqualification checks, signed application forms, and two references. The review may also evaluate whether shortlisting includes online searches, whether candidates are informed, and if DBS and barred list checks are conducted and recorded appropriately. Compliance with regulations for retaining and managing sensitive information is essential.

How was this assessed:

- Discussion with those the manage the personnel files
- Review of personnel files
- Discussion with DSL

Judgement: Substantial Evidence with Positive Indicators

The bullet points provided under the judgement are illustrative examples and do not represent an exhaustive summary of the specific issues or strengths identified within the school.

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1. Insufficient Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Personnel files have not been reviewed, or there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about their organisation, completeness, or compliance
2. Limited Evidence with Areas for Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Limited evidence suggests personnel files are inconsistently organised or missing required information, such as ID checks, references, or signed application forms.Processes for overseeing the files may lack clarity, and compliance with KCSiE 2024 requirements may be inconsistent.
3. Limited Evidence with Positive Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Limited evidence shows that most required documentation and checks are present in personnel files, but there may be occasional gaps, such as missing references or incomplete overseas checks.Files are generally well-ordered, but improvements in oversight or compliance processes may be needed.
4. Substantial Evidence with Areas for Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Substantial evidence demonstrates that personnel files are well-maintained, with most required documentation and checks completed.Processes for oversight are effective, but minor improvements may be needed, such as ensuring shortlisting consistently includes online searches or refining how sensitive information is retained and managed.
5. Substantial Evidence with Positive Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Substantial evidence indicates personnel files are well-organised, fully compliant with KCSiE 2025, and contain all required documentation and checks.Oversight processes are robust, ensuring files are regularly reviewed and updated.All checks, including ID verification, right to work, mental and physical fitness, references, and DBS/barred list checks, are consistently completed and accurately recorded.Shortlisting processes include online searches, and candidates are informed in line with regulations.The school demonstrates a strong safeguarding culture through its meticulous record-keeping and personnel file management.

Notes on judgement:

Evidence from case sampling suggests personnel files are well organised, compliant and contain all required documentation and checks (ID, references, DBS), including for overseas checks and timely S128 checks for those promoted to SLT.

Dates of receipt correspond accurately to SCR recording.

Shortlisting processes include online searches, evidenced in folders.

Areas for development:

Training records, KCSiE confirmations and induction completions are not centrally accessible and could be more effectively maintained.

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CURRICULUM

What are we looking for?

When reviewing the curriculum, the focus is on how Personal, Social, Health, and Economic (PSHE) education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), and Computing are designed and delivered to promote safeguarding and student wellbeing. Evidence may be sought on how sensitive topics such as consent, healthy relationships, sexual exploitation, and harmful behaviours are taught, and how teaching is quality assured. The review may consider the use of assemblies, drop-down days, and form time to address British Values, online safety, and acceptance of difference. It may also evaluate how vulnerable students, including those with SEND or those identifying as LGBTQ+, are supported within the curriculum. Age-appropriate teaching, staff support in delivering these topics, and alignment with *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSiE) 2024 guidance are key considerations.

How was this assessed:

- Discussion with DSL/Safeguarding team
- Discussion with RSHE lead
- Review of RSHE curriculum plans
- Review of RSHE policy documentation
- Discussion with staff who teach RSHE
- Discussion with students

Judgement: Substantial Evidence with Positive Indicators

The bullet points provided under the judgement are illustrative examples and do not represent an exhaustive summary of the specific issues or strengths identified within the school.

1. Not Reviewed or Insufficient Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The curriculum has not been reviewed, or there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about its design, delivery, or safeguarding content.
2. Limited Evidence with Areas for Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited evidence suggests gaps in the PSHE/RSE curriculum, such as insufficient time allocation, inconsistent delivery, or a lack of quality assurance processes.• Teaching on sensitive topics, such as harmful behaviours or online safety, may be minimal or not age-appropriate, and vulnerable students may lack tailored support.
3. Limited Evidence with Positive Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited evidence shows that the curriculum includes PSHE/RSE and online safety, with teaching on key safeguarding topics generally in place.• Assemblies, drop-down days, and form time contribute to promoting wellbeing and British Values, but there may be gaps in supporting vulnerable students or addressing specific safeguarding areas.
4. Substantial Evidence with Areas for Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Substantial evidence demonstrates that PSHE/RSE is well-planned and delivered, covering key safeguarding topics, with specialist staff or appropriate support for teachers.• Assemblies, drop-down days, and form time are used effectively, and vulnerable students, including those with SEND or identifying as LGBTQ+, receive tailored support.• Some areas for improvement may include more consistent quality assurance or enhanced support for teaching staff in delivering sensitive topics.

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5. Substantial Evidence with Positive Indicators

- Substantial evidence indicates a robust, well-designed curriculum that fully aligns with KCSiE 2025. PSHE/RSE, Computing, and related activities comprehensively address safeguarding topics, including consent, healthy relationships, harmful behaviours, and online safety.
- Assemblies, drop-down days, and form time are integrated effectively to promote wellbeing, acceptance of difference, and British Values.
- Vulnerable students, including those with SEND or identifying as LGBTQ+, are well-supported through tailored approaches.
- Teachers are well-prepared and supported in delivering sensitive topics, with robust quality assurance processes in place to ensure consistency and impact.

Notes on judgement:

PSHE is delivered through Jigsaw and One Decision and supported by the school's bespoke behaviour curriculum. Pupils and staff speak confidently about the use of these.

Circle time sessions in every class address additional PSHE issues arising.

Worry Monsters are embedded in every class to ensure additional support is available to pupils when needed.

A range of interventions are in place across both sites to support wellbeing, protective behaviours and harmful sexualised language/behaviours.

RSE is well mapped out and is only delivered by qualified teachers who have received training.

Online safety teaching is embedded through Computing and PSHE and the use of Purple Mash 'To Be Safe' content.

Parents are provided regular information regarding online safety strategies for home use.

Staff speak about tailored and responsive teaching to address incidents (e.g., body parts, consent, exposure to harmful behaviours).

Pupils speak about strong safeguarding themes across lessons including safety, emotions, alcohol awareness, and cyberbullying.

Pupils are confident in articulating risks and describing keeping-safe strategies.

Assemblies and themed days promote safeguarding knowledge.

Staff feel well supported in teaching sensitive topics.

Pupil progress in these areas is captured qualitatively in pupil progress meetings and when considering related behaviour targets and EHCP targets

Areas for development:

Quality assurance activities over time will support leaders to gain a view on consistency of the quality of curriculum provision across both sites.

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STAFF VIEW

What are we looking for?

When reviewing staff understanding of safeguarding, the focus is on their knowledge of policies, procedures, and their role in keeping children safe. Evidence may be sought on the training staff have received, including online safety, child-on-child abuse, and other safeguarding topics such as Prevent, CSE, and FGM. Discussions may explore how staff report concerns, their understanding of the safeguarding team's processes, and how they feel supported by the DSL and safeguarding team. The review may also assess staff awareness of filtering and monitoring systems, including how inappropriate content is blocked and reported, and their understanding of processes for keeping children safe online. Additionally, staff awareness of safeguarding documents, such as *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2024* and the code of conduct, and their knowledge of the biggest risks in the local area are considered. Staff confidence in addressing concerns, including those about colleagues or leadership, may also be assessed.

How was this assessed:

- Discussion with staff

Judgement: Substantial Evidence with Positive Indicators

The bullet points provided under the judgement are illustrative examples and do not represent an exhaustive summary of the specific issues or strengths identified within the school.

1. Insufficient Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff safeguarding understanding has not been reviewed, or there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about their knowledge or confidence in safeguarding processes.
2. Limited Evidence with Areas for Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited evidence indicates that staff have basic safeguarding knowledge but may lack confidence in reporting concerns or understanding key topics like online safety, child-on-child abuse, or local safeguarding risks.• Training may be inconsistent, and staff understanding of policies and documents, such as KCSiE 2024, may be limited.
3. Limited Evidence with Positive Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited evidence shows that staff generally understand how to report concerns and have received basic safeguarding training.• There may be gaps in their understanding of specific safeguarding issues, their role in supporting PHSE/RSE, or the school's approach to local risks and child-on-child abuse.
4. Substantial Evidence with Areas for Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Substantial evidence demonstrates that staff are confident in reporting concerns, understand safeguarding policies and processes, and have received regular training on key topics like online safety and abuse.• Staff feel supported by the DSL and safeguarding team, and there is evidence of engagement with safeguarding documents, such as KCSiE 2024.• Some areas for improvement may include ensuring more consistent understanding of local risks or providing additional support for staff delivering PHSE/RSE.
5. Substantial Evidence with Positive Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Substantial evidence indicates that staff have a thorough understanding of safeguarding policies, processes, and their roles.

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- They are well-trained on key topics, including online safety, child-on-child abuse, and local risks, and are confident in reporting concerns and escalating issues when necessary.
- Staff feel fully supported by the DSL and safeguarding team and are familiar with safeguarding documents, such as KCSiE 2025 and the code of conduct.
- They are well-prepared to deliver PHSE/RSE and online safety topics, contributing to a robust safeguarding culture.

Notes on judgement:

Staff describe a strong safeguarding culture across both sites and a highly visible DSL team.

Staff feel confident reporting concerns; understand policies, CPOMS, and escalation routes.

They understand online safety, sexualised behaviour indicators, and Prevent.

Staff feel supported, trained and valued.

There is a strong awareness of local safeguarding risks.

A staff newsletter includes safeguarding updates.

Reflexive practice is supported by daily safeguarding reminders and reflection meetings.

Areas for development:

It would be helpful for staff on the Dunstable site to access the same safeguarding scenario reminders during a Monday briefing that staff find beneficial on the Stevenage site.

STUDENT VIEW

What are we looking for?

When reviewing students' perspectives on safeguarding, the focus is on their sense of safety, both on and off the school site, and their understanding of how the school supports their wellbeing. Evidence may be sought on whether students feel safe in school, how incidents like bullying or derogatory language are addressed, and how staff ensure safety during breaks and lunchtimes. Discussions may explore the school's curriculum on safeguarding topics such as e-safety, substance misuse, relationships, and local risks. Students' knowledge of reporting concerns, how these are treated, and their experiences with behaviour and inclusivity may also be assessed. The review may also examine whether students feel supported in their transition into secondary school and whether their needs are addressed respectfully and effectively.

How was this assessed:

- Discussion with a group of female students from years
- Discussion with a group of male students from years

Judgement: Substantial Evidence with Positive Indicators

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The bullet points provided under the judgement are illustrative examples and do not represent an exhaustive summary of the specific issues or strengths identified within the school.

	1. Insufficient Evidence
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students' perspectives on safeguarding have not been reviewed, or there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about their sense of safety or the school's support.
	2. Limited Evidence with Areas for Development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited evidence indicates that some students feel safe in school, but there may be concerns about specific spaces, bullying, or staff supervision during breaks. Students may lack awareness of how to report concerns or have mixed experiences with the school's response to issues such as harmful language or behaviour. Safeguarding topics in the curriculum may be inconsistently delivered.
	3. Limited Evidence with Positive Indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited evidence suggests that most students feel safe in school and understand how to report concerns, but there may be occasional gaps in supervision or inclusivity. The curriculum includes safeguarding topics, but some students may feel less informed about local risks or specific issues like harmful sexual behaviour.
	4. Substantial Evidence with Areas for Development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantial evidence demonstrates that students feel safe in school, understand how to report concerns, and trust staff to respond appropriately. The school effectively addresses bullying, harmful language, and behaviour, and the curriculum covers key safeguarding topics, including local risks. Some areas for improvement may include enhancing supervision during breaks or addressing specific spaces students perceive as unsafe.
	5. Substantial Evidence with Positive Indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantial evidence indicates a strong safeguarding culture where students feel safe, supported, and valued. Students are confident in reporting concerns and feel these are handled seriously and effectively. The curriculum comprehensively covers safeguarding topics, and the school proactively addresses bullying, inclusivity, and harmful behaviours. Staff ensure robust supervision, and students feel safe in all areas of the school. The school provides excellent support for transitions and equips students with knowledge about local risks and how to stay safe.

Notes on judgement:

Pupils overwhelmingly report feeling safe in school. They can name trusted adults and know how to seek help.

Pupils talk confidently about safety online, safe behaviours on trips, bullying, and emotional regulation.

Boys spoke about cyberbullying, unsafe online content, bullying in football and trusted adults.

Girls described how they stay safe online, who they speak to, and what to do if something or someone feels unsafe, including on transport.

Pupils showed strong understanding of PSHE content (e.g., dangers of smoking/alcohol).

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Pupils feel adults help resolve issues quickly and fairly.

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COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST FOR POLICY DOCUMENTS

Child Protection Policy		
<i>Does the policy include:</i>	Yes/No	Comments
Child-on-child abuse, including sexual violence, harassment and harmful sexual behaviour (KCSiE 2025, Part 5, para 159)	Yes	
Clear reporting systems for concerns (para 96)	Yes	
Procedures aligned with government guidance and locally agreed multi-agency safeguarding arrangements (paras 106–113)	Yes	
Policies on online safety, including emerging harms such as misinformation, disinformation, conspiracy theories, and AI risks (paras 135, 143)	Partial	Strong online-safety section (pp. 38–39) and four-risk model, but mis/disinformation & AI-specific risks are not named here; these are covered in Online Safety / Code of Conduct rather than CP policy. Consider adding a short paragraph signposting these emerging harms in CP policy.
References to SEND and additional vulnerabilities (paras 201–205)	Yes	
References to attendance as safeguarding and children missing education (paras 177–178)	Yes	
Annual review schedule and public accessibility via the website	Yes	
Clearly describe the role and identity of the DSL (para 8 and Annex C)	Yes	
Highlight that mental health concerns can indicate safeguarding issues (para 43)	Yes	
Reference to the Virtual School Head’s role in promoting the achievement of children with a social worker and those in kinship care (para 199)	Yes	
Commitment to the Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998 in safeguarding context	Yes	
References to new resources (Lucy Faithfull Foundation Shore Space – para 545; CSA Centre; Children’s Society – Annex B)	Partial	General external resources are cited elsewhere (e.g., Online Safety/Anti-Bullying lists). Lucy Faithfull Shore Space/CSA Centre/Children’s Society are not explicitly cited in CP policy.
Staff Code of Conduct Policy		
<i>Does the policy include:</i>	Yes/No	Comments
Guidance on acceptable use of technology, including mobile devices and social media	Yes	

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Clear expectations around appropriate staff/pupil relationships, boundaries, and communication (paras 98, 437)	Yes	
Reference to a low-level concerns policy and how concerns should be raised and recorded (Part 4, Section 2)	Yes	
Cross-reference to whistleblowing arrangements	Yes	
Behaviour Policy		
<i>Does the policy include:</i>	Yes/No	Comments
Measures to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based, and discriminatory bullying (paras 11, 98)	Yes	
Reference to positive behaviour support and safeguarding culture	Yes	
Guidance on reasonable force, restraint, and positive handling (paras 166–168)	Yes	
Medical Needs Policy		
<i>Does the policy include:</i>	Yes/No	Comments
Procedures for managing medical conditions and the safe dispensing of medicines	Partial	Policy references controlled medication stored in school office; it is kept elsewhere on both sites.
Clear reference to how health or medical needs may indicate safeguarding risks	Yes	
Alignment with statutory guidance on supporting pupils with medical conditions	Yes	
Whistleblowing Policy		
<i>Does the policy include:</i>	Yes/No	Comments
Clear processes for reporting safeguarding concerns, including those about leaders	Yes	
Cross-reference to the Staff Code of Conduct (para 98)	Yes	
Assurance that staff and governors are aware of and reminded regularly	Yes	
Explicit protection for whistleblowers from detriment	Yes	
Allegations Against Staff Policy		
<i>Does the policy include:</i>	Yes/No	Comments
Referral process to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Yes	
Distinction between allegations that meet the harm threshold and low-level concerns (Part 4, paras 431–447)	Yes	
Systems for recording and monitoring low-level concerns	Yes	
Clarity on managing allegations against supply staff, contractors, or volunteers	Yes	

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Attendance Policy		
<i>Does the policy include:</i>	Yes/No	Comments
Procedures for managing children missing education and preventing unlawful off-rolling (para 178)	Yes	
Reference to attendance as safeguarding and duty to work with children's services where absence indicates risk (para 177)	Yes	
Procedures for Elective Home Education (paras 179–182)	No	EHE not explicitly outlined.
Link to monitoring and escalation systems for persistent absence	Yes	
Harmful Sexual Behaviour Policy		
<i>Does the policy include:</i>	Yes/No	Comments
Clear preventative and responsive strategies for harmful sexual behaviour, harassment, and online abuse	Yes	
Alignment with Part 5 of KCSiE 2025	Yes	
Reference to use of external resources such as the CSA Centre and Children's Society	Partial	Consider signposting to external resources.
RSE Policy		
<i>Does the policy include:</i>	Yes/No	Comments
Curriculum content covering safeguarding topics including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive Relationships • Healthy Relationships • Consent & Kindness • Equality & Prejudice • Body Confidence • Abuse & Coercion • Sexual Harassment & Abuse • Sexual Violence (Unacceptable & Never Victim's Fault) 	Yes	
Procedures for parental withdrawal from sex education	Yes	
Reference to statutory RSHE guidance (updated for 2026, para 129)	Yes	
Awareness of forthcoming guidance on gender-questioning children (para 204)	Partial	Inclusive practice and equality are clear; explicit mention of forthcoming DfE guidance on gender-questioning children not included.
Evidence of inclusivity for SEND and LGBTQ+ pupils	Yes	
Safer Recruitment Policy		

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<i>Does the policy include:</i>	Yes/No	Comments
Procedures for DBS, barred list, identity, right to work, and overseas checks	Yes	
Requirement for Section 128 checks for leadership positions	Yes	
Requirement to carry out and record online searches of shortlisted candidates (para 225)	Yes	
Processes for retaining recruitment evidence securely	Yes	
Alignment with GOV.UK safer recruitment guidance (paras 260, 266, 319, 331), with TRA references removed	Yes	
Clear oversight of personnel files to ensure all required checks are documented	Yes	
<p>Summary of recommended actions:</p> <p>CP Policy - Add a short clause referencing misinformation/disinformation and AI risks as part of the online-safety landscape; cross-reference your online safety standards</p> <p>CP Policy - Consider explicit signposts to Lucy Faithfull Foundation Shore Space, CSA Centre, and Children’s Society in CP annex/resources</p> <p>Medical Conditions - Consider explicit citation to DfE Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions guidance; name the responsible person and update location for both sites.</p> <p>Attendance - Add Elective Home Education procedures (LA liaison, safeguarding checks, reintegration); cross-reference CME and CP policy.</p> <p>RSE - Gender-questioning children: Considering adding a brief watch-point acknowledging forthcoming DfE guidance and commitment to update delivery accordingly.</p>		