



Schools' Safeguarding Review Report

Education Safeguarding, School Effectiveness

School Name: Cardrew Court School

Head Teacher: Kerry Towers

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Kerry Towers

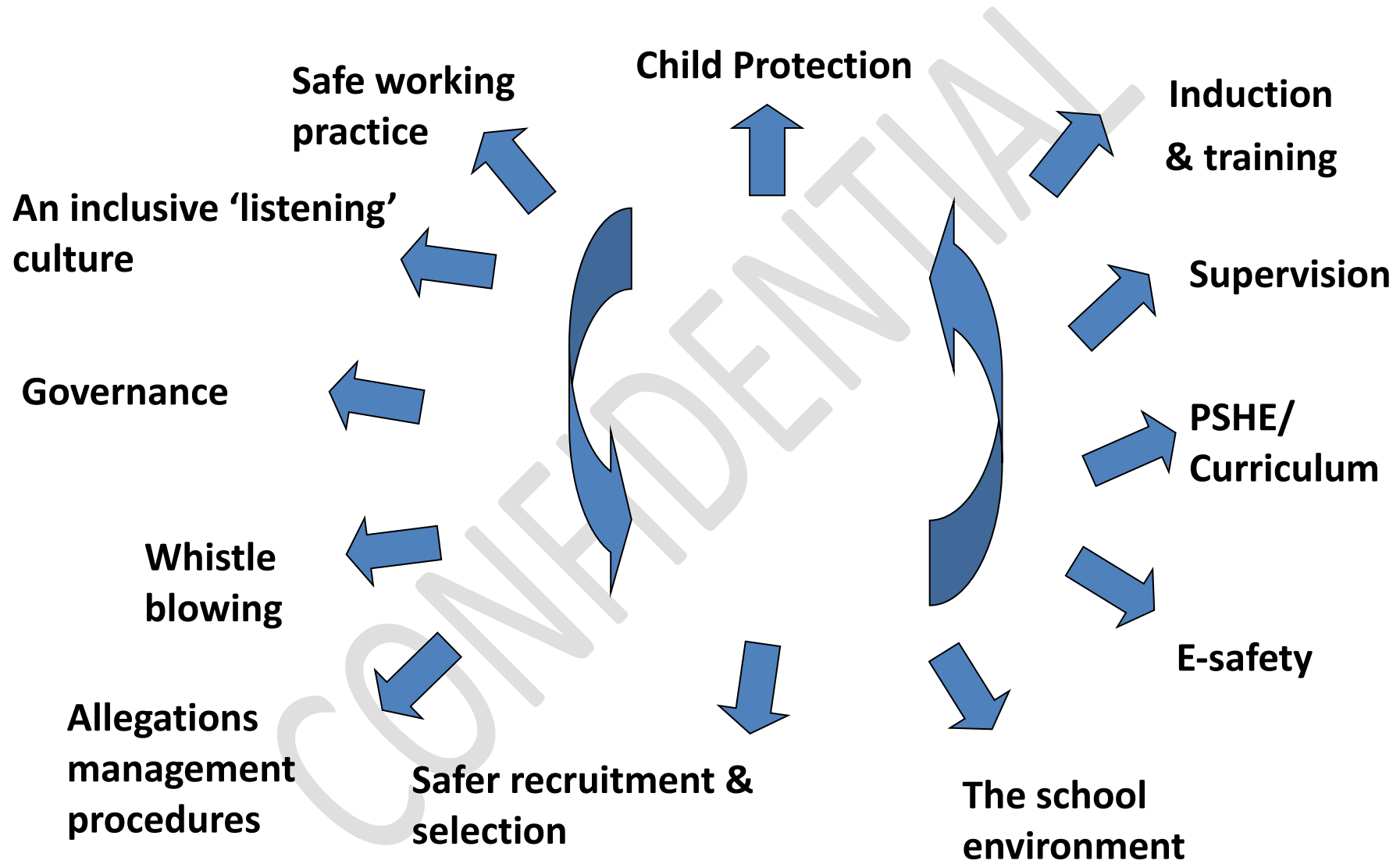
Officers: Thomas Thorp, Education Safeguarding Lead Officer

Date of Visit: 31/03/2026



Areas of Focus:

- 1. Leadership and governance**
- 2. Policies and procedures**
- 3. Recognising and Responding to Child Protection concerns**
- 4. Supporting and working with children and their families**
- 5. Adults working with children**



School Context

Cardew Court School is a recently established specialist provision for pupils all of whom have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). The school primarily supports pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs, alongside a significant number of pupils with autism, high anxiety and emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA).

Many pupils have experienced prolonged periods out of education prior to placement and arrive with complex histories of trauma, anxiety and disrupted educational experiences. For a number of pupils, placement at Cardew Court represents a re-engagement with education following periods of absence or unsuccessful provision. As such, safeguarding, attendance, emotional wellbeing and engagement are intrinsically linked within the school's model and cannot be considered in isolation.

The school operates a highly personalised and trauma-informed approach, including small classes, high staff-to-pupil ratios, therapeutic input, flexible transitions and carefully monitored reduced timetables where required. The school is currently in a planned phase of growth, with rising pupil numbers and staffing.

1. Leadership and Governance

Cardew Court School presents as a specialist provision with a strong relational safeguarding culture. Leaders and staff demonstrated openness, professionalism and a clear commitment to safeguarding during the visit. Safeguarding is understood as a core responsibility across the school rather than a discrete function.

Safeguarding leadership is highly visible. The Headteacher, who holds Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) responsibility, provides both strategic oversight and day-to-day operational safeguarding leadership. Weekly safeguarding meetings are held and form a central forum for triangulating safeguarding, attendance and behaviour information, ensuring that emerging concerns are viewed within the wider context of pupil wellbeing and engagement.

On the surface, the Headteacher's visibility and breadth of responsibility and roles could suggest a potential single point of failure in safeguarding leadership were she to be absent. However, this was not borne out during the visit. To the school's credit, developing systems, shared processes and a growing collective understanding of safeguarding responsibilities are increasingly well embedded. These arrangements provide emerging resilience beyond any one individual and reflect thoughtful, reflective leadership, particularly within an expanding specialist provision. There are also plans to potentially recruit into the safeguarding team as the provision grows which would be a positive and proactive step.

Governance arrangements, while not statutory, are taken seriously and demonstrate a developing safeguarding focus. The safeguarding governor is engaged, knowledgeable and able to articulate priority areas for strengthening oversight. Notably, the governor themselves identified the need to review and update governance terms of reference, recognising this as an important step in clarifying roles, strengthening accountability and ensuring safeguarding scrutiny remains proportional and effective as the school grows.

Recommendations – Leadership and Governance

- As the school continues to expand, ensure safeguarding leadership capacity remains sufficient to maintain current levels of oversight, particularly in relation to attendance and pupil vulnerability.
- Progress the planned review and updating of governance terms of reference, ensuring safeguarding roles, responsibilities and reporting lines are clearly defined to support effective challenge and accountability.
- Continue to strengthen governance safeguarding assurance, including governor oversight in trips and outdoor education, as planned.

2. Policies and Procedures

Cardew Court School has an appropriate and comprehensive safeguarding policy framework aligned with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) and Working Together to Safeguard Children. Policies reflect a strong understanding of contemporary safeguarding risks, including child-on-child abuse, contextual safeguarding, online harm and mental health vulnerabilities. Staff described safeguarding procedures confidently and consistently. Expectations around listening, recording and reporting concerns are well understood. CPOMS is used effectively across the school, with urgent concerns escalated verbally alongside electronic recording to ensure timely response.

A clear strength is the school's approach to safeguarding information on admission. Leaders actively go above and beyond and request safeguarding records from previous schools and services going back years, including where pupils have been out of education for prolonged periods. This demonstrates a responsible and safeguarding-led approach to transition and contributes to a strong understanding of pupil history and risk.

Some variation was identified in staff understanding of follow-up when they log concerns. While staff expressed confidence in safeguarding leaders and trust that action would be taken, clearer communication about processes and progression would further strengthen transparency and confidence, particularly as the staff team grows.

As the school continues to develop, ensuring that core safeguarding systems evolve in line with growth will be important. This includes maintaining clear oversight and accountability for safer recruitment processes, to ensure safeguarding assurance remains robust as staffing numbers increase.

Recommendations – Policies and Procedures

- Strengthen clarity around post-reporting communication so staff better understand how safeguarding concerns progress, while maintaining appropriate confidentiality.
- Continue monitoring CPOMS usage and reporting patterns to support consistency and trend analysis as staffing increases.
- Consider ensuring the Single Central Record (SCR) is fully overseen and quality-assured within Cardew Court School, providing clear accountability and organisational resilience.

3. Recognising and Responding to Child Protection Concerns

Staff demonstrated a strong understanding of how to recognise and respond to child protection concerns. Safeguarding training is regular, reinforced through briefings and inset activity, and clearly reflected in staff confidence and practice. Staff were able to articulate signs of abuse, neglect and vulnerability and understood escalation expectations.

Pupils spoken to during the visit reported feeling safe in school and were able to identify trusted adults. Bullying was reported as non-existent, and pupils expressed confidence that concerns would be addressed appropriately if raised. Several pupils were able to describe not only who they would speak to if worried, but also conveyed confidence that concerns would be taken seriously and acted upon, indicating trust in both staff and safeguarding processes. This aligns with pupil voice activity and parental feedback.

Leaders were able to clearly articulate how safeguarding concerns are monitored and reviewed beyond initial reporting. Safeguarding discussions form part of routine leadership activity, including weekly safeguarding meetings, where concerns are reviewed collectively and considered alongside attendance, behaviour and wellbeing information. This approach supports reflective decision-making and helps ensure responses are proportionate, timely and informed by a broader understanding of risk.

A small number of staff demonstrated a tendency to defer safeguarding concerns to senior colleagues or those perceived as having greater safeguarding expertise. While this reflects appropriate professional trust and a desire to ensure concerns are handled correctly, it also highlights the ongoing importance of reinforcing the principle that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Recommendations – Recognising and Responding

- Re-emphasise through training, briefings and leadership modelling that safeguarding responsibility rests with all staff, not only those with specific safeguarding roles.
- Reinforce expectations that all low-level concerns are formally recorded to support pattern recognition and early intervention.

4. Supporting and Working with Children and Their Families

Safeguarding at Cardew Court is closely integrated with attendance, behaviour and inclusion systems. This enables leaders to build a holistic picture of vulnerability and respond proactively.

Attendance is explicitly framed as a safeguarding issue. The school's Attendance Matters Strategy reflects a strong understanding of the relationship between EBSA, trauma and engagement. Graduated responses are used appropriately, including reduced timetables where necessary, with at least fortnightly review meetings to ensure arrangements are purposeful, scrutinised and time-limited.

Strong "eyes-on" practice is evident for pupils not attending full time, including home visits, community meetings and online contact. This significantly reduces the risk of pupils becoming unseen.

Parental feedback is overwhelmingly positive. Parents reported that their children feel safe and that staff are caring, approachable and responsive. Some parental feedback reflects understandable concerns around staffing capacity, continuity and communication as the school grows. Leaders are aware of this and are already reflecting on how best to maintain relational practice at scale.

Recommendations – Supporting Children and Families

- Continue to strengthen alignment between safeguarding, attendance and inclusion systems.
- Develop clearer parental liaison capacity as the school expands to maintain strong relationships and consistent communication.
- Maintain close scrutiny of reduced timetables to ensure safeguarding oversight remains robust.

5. Adults Working with Children

Cardew Court School demonstrates a strong safeguarding culture among adults. Staff spoke positively about professional relationships and reported confidence in whistleblowing procedures, safe working practice expectations and conduct standards. There is a shared understanding of professional boundaries and appropriate behaviour.

The culture around low-level concerns at Cardew Court School is positive, open and underpinned by professional trust. Staff demonstrated confidence in raising concerns and engaging in reflective discussion, which is indicative of a healthy safeguarding environment. However, not all staff were consistently able to articulate the importance of formally recording all low-level concerns, suggesting some variability in understanding of how these records contribute to wider safeguarding oversight. Consistent and systematic recording of low-level concerns plays a crucial role in building a cumulative picture over time, enabling leaders to support staff, identify patterns, strengthen professional curiosity and ensure potential decisions are informed by a full and accurate evidence base.

Safeguarding supervision arrangements are developing, including Educational Psychologist-led supervision, which staff described positively. Given the emotional demands associated with supporting a highly vulnerable cohort, this represents an important protective factor for staff wellbeing and safeguarding consistency.

Recommendations – Adults Working with Children

- Maintain and reinforce the strong culture around professional conduct, openness and whistleblowing.
- Continue to strengthen expectations around consistent formal recording of low-level concerns to support organisational learning and early identification of risk.
- Extend and formalise staff supervision arrangements to support emotional resilience, reflective practice and safeguarding sustainability as complexity and staff numbers increase.

Summary

Cardew Court School has strong safeguarding foundations underpinned by relational practice, reflective leadership and a clear understanding of pupil vulnerability. Safeguarding is embedded across systems, culture and daily practice and is appropriately aligned with attendance, wellbeing and inclusion.

The actions identified through this review are developmental rather than remedial and relate primarily to capacity, consistency and sustainability as the school grows. Leaders demonstrate clear awareness of these risks and a willingness to adapt systems accordingly.

With continued focus on shared responsibility, supervision and scalable systems, Cardew Court School is well placed to maintain and further strengthen its safeguarding arrangements as it continues to develop.

If you would like this information in another format please contact: **Cornwall Council, County Hall, Treyew Road, Truro TR1 3AY**

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