



Safeguarding Review Feedback

Name of School	Elmtree Grove School
Date and Time of Review	Monday 17 th November 2025
Name of ESS Safeguarding Consultant	Debbie Smith
Name of Head Teacher	Tyrone Perry-Harry (Executive Headteacher)
Safeguarding Team	Tyrone Perry-Harry (DSL and Executive Headteacher) Emily Butcher (DDSL and Operations Lead) Hollie Bryant (Group DSL and Director of Education)
Number on Roll	26
PAN	40

Context of School:

Elmtree Grove is a small independent special school based in Bristol and is part of the Elementa Education Group. The school caters for children aged 4-12 years with Autism.

The school initially opened on an alternate provision model in September 2024 and then became a registered school from January 2025.

There has been a period of change this term with the dismissal of the previous headteacher following a number of complaints. An internal investigation has been carried out with identified learning and actions taken. School leaders are in contact with the LADO regarding this matter and have been advised to ensure safer recruitment procedures are followed in terms of any future reference.

This external safeguarding review has been commissioned to give independent oversight and scrutiny of safeguarding arrangements at Elmtree Grove.

Pupils open to children's services:

0 x CP
1 x CIN
1 x Undergoing CSC assessment
3 x CLA
2 x Early Help

Whole school attendance: 75.2%





Findings	
School Site	Elmtree Grove school is two story building in a residential area and set slightly back from a busy road. 70% of pupils arrive by taxi, with the remaining children dropped off and collected by parents and carers. The arrival and exit of children is well managed and safe with appropriate measures in place. Traffic cones are placed outside the school to ensure space is left for taxis to drop child off immediately outside of the school. Two members of the senior leadership team wear Hi-Viz jackets and greet the children outside the school as they are dropped off. They are escorted by staff from the taxi into the school premises via the initial school gate and then met by two further staff at the second gate. Which is securely locked once the school day begins. Any technology is removed on arrival and placed in a named security box for the duration of the school day. The school offers a welcoming space with the school values and expectations clearly displayed. The school operates on all 3 floors with the children with the highest level of SEMH need on the ground floor. There are positive breakout areas and individual or small group intervention spaces, including a library and sensory space. There are restrictors placed on all windows. The school operates as a nut free site and has a clean and well-maintained kitchen for the children to use for food technology lessons. Visibility of safeguarding is good throughout the school with 'Keeping you Safe' posters in all classrooms along with emotional regulation tools. Access control systems are in place on doors with staff each having a fob to open these as needed. There is a large playground area which is well maintained and offers an interactive space for pupils. There is also a large garden pod which provides a quieter indoor space for those children who require a quieter time at break and lunch times. Visibility on the playground is good with no hidden areas of concern. A medical room with a fold up bed is available as needed. This includes a self-contained toilet and shower. All medication is appropriately stored and locked. School have purchased an anaphylaxis kit for emergency use.





	First Aid is recorded on Evolve, however the system can be challenging at times with difficulties in logging in. Appropriate medical needs plans and intimate care plans are in place for children; however, these must be reviewed on an annual basis. For those children with asthma, asthma action plans should be in place. The administration of medicated is recorded, these should also be reviewed annually, and any administration of medication should be witnessed and signed for by two staff members. Risk Assessments are in place as required and the site risk assessment was seen. Trip risk assessments require management sign off prior to any trip taking place. All policies have been recently reviewed except for the fire policy as this is being reviewed with Penninsula during visit the week following the safeguarding review. There is a lockdown procedure in place and a fire evacuation procedure. These are practiced on a termly basis. The evacuation point for the fire is the rear playground, however in the event of a large-scale incident this may not be appropriate. The procedure therefore requires clarity that a second evacuation point may be necessary and will be assessed on a dynamic risk assessment basis. Leader should discuss this with Penninsula. Penninsula is the external fire compliance company commissioned by the school and they undertake regular reviews of the site arrangements. The fire record book evidences the Penninsula checks, however, this should be regularly completed by leaders to also log weekly checks and drills. Personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPS) should be developed for any child who would require support to exit the building. This includes those with SEMH and sensory needs. Filtering and monitoring arrangements are in place and this service is provided by Smooth Wall. Any reports are sent to a member of the senior leadership team. However, this has only been triggered by innocent staff searches. There have been no flags for children as arrangements for ICT use are robust. Whilst it is evident that health and safety and security arrangements have been prioritised, there is one area where security could be further strengthened. Whilst there are no breaches in the perimeter and there is adequate fencing, consideration should be given to the side area of the school and the potential
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	for children to abscond from the site by climbing onto the lower gate and the neighbour's extension roof.
Safeguarding Team, Referrals, Recording and Policy	The safeguarding team within the school consists of the Headteacher as the Designated safeguarding lead and the Operations leads as the Deputy Designated safeguarding lead. The team are supported by the Group safeguarding lead who has oversight of arrangements and works alongside DSL's within the group to offer support, advice and direction. Fortnightly safeguarding meetings take place with the group DSL with all children for whom there are concerns discussed. Appropriate information is then shared at weekly SLT meetings and during whole staff daily briefings on a need-to-know basis. It is recommended to further enhance these arrangements; cases are RAG rated at a school level with Amber and Red cases being shared at the Group DSL meetings and the Green cases being managed at school level safeguarding meetings. COPMS is used to record safeguarding concerns and CPOMS Insight is used across the group by the group DSL to ensure strategic safeguarding oversight. During this review, cases were audited on CPOMS with regular and appropriate recording and clear evidence of follow up action observed. Thresholds are clearly understood with evidence of high-quality referrals to external agencies including escalation within children's social care. Children's risks are responded to appropriately with a balance of intervention and risk assessment. A risk assessment for a child with a history of some sexualised behaviour was seen and appears to be managing risks effectively. These plans should be reviewed on a termly basis to ensure they are appropriately up to date. Low level concerns are recorded as required in statutory guidance, however these arrangements could be further strengthened through use of a clear reporting form or operating system. This should include details of the person raising the concern. School attendance is recorded and monitored by leaders through the Arbor system. Attendance at the time of the review was lower than expected at 75.2%. However, this figure has been significantly impacted by the recent complaint issues and also by an increase in suspensions which was required as part of the behaviour reset of expectations following the departure of the previous Headteacher. 15.5 school days were lost to suspension during this reset, however since the appointment of the new Headteacher there has only been 2 days lost.





	Arrangements for alternate provision are robust. Of the 26 children on the school roll, 19 attend the school and currently 7 are accessing alternate provision. All appropriate quality assurance documentation is in place, along with termly visits to the provision by senior leaders and receipt of regular reports on children's progress. It is recommended that future visits are captured on visit reports and these are logged on CPOMS. There is a new behaviour system in place that focuses on a restorative approach with positive incentives and clear consequences. All children have a behaviour plan in place based on 'The 6 Stages of Crisis' and all children have a Thrive action plan. The school adopts the Thrive principles and two members of staff are currently undertaking the training to become accredited Thrive Practitioners. All staff are trained in deescalation and physical intervention through Team Teach. There is regular ongoing training throughout the year. Any physical intervention holds are recorded in a bound book which is regularly audited by the group DSL. Since the departure of the previous headteacher and in-line with the new behaviour approach, there has been a 50% reduction in the number of recorded holds. During the Autumn Term, there have been 11 recorded holds which have been audited and noted as proportionate to the situation. Safeguarding supervision arrangements are in place; however, these would benefit from further strengthening. There are informal arrangements in place on the school site with the Headteacher offering time for reflection and the group DSL offers supervision space to leaders. There is currently no safeguarding supervision in place for the group DSL. This is a recommendation for development of supervision arrangements.
Culture, Ethos & Voice of the Child and Staff voice	Elmtree Grove is a welcoming school, promoting a sense of belonging with a child centred ethos. The school uses the thrive principles which focus on supporting children's emotional health and well-being through a needs-led whole school approach. The school has a clear set of values based around empathy, trust and respect. These are visual around the school, and the children are familiar with the values and understand their meaning. Expectations are clear and again these are well signposted around the school. Further work is needed on the school vision as this is not understood by children and is based on 6 complex statements. The vision should be clear to the whole school community.





	Child voice was positive during the visit, children told me they like the offer at the school, they particularly spoke about art arrangements and their PE sessions. They said staff are friendly and approachable and were able to identify adults within the school they would go to if they had a concern. Although there was acknowledgement of some behaviours that challenge, they did not speak of any significant bullying or feelings of being unsafe within the school. They felt the building was safe and secure. Staff spoken to were very positive about the recent changes within the school. They said the new head teacher has made significant progress and introduced several new measures which has led to increased consistency, better routines and a calmer environment. Both staff and children spoken to spoke positively about the new behaviour system and it was clearly well understood. Staff stated they have confidence that children are safe in the school. They have trust in the safeguarding team and state they always get a response to concerns raised. Staff spoke of feeling heard, open dialogue with leaders and reflection within the staff team. They were all able to evidence their regular use of CPOMS and their understanding of procedures. Staff shared feeling appropriately informed of the children's needs and vulnerabilities and stated the daily updates with the new headteacher have been useful in ensuring information is appropriately shared. Positive relationships with children were observed throughout the day. Interactions evidenced a good understanding of children's needs. Children are encouraged to share concerns and there is a child friendly safeguarding policy 'keeping you safe'. This is effectively signposted throughout the school with helpful visuals in every classroom.
Safeguarding Governance and S175	Rather than a traditional governing body, there is an Advisory Board that supports oversight of arrangements at Elmtree Grove. The Advisory Board consists of a number of highly skilled individuals including a previous chair of governance, a deputy head of a county virtual school, a behaviour specialist, a lead from a learning federation and a specialist in critical incidents and business continuity. The board does not meet to hold regular board meetings. Support from board members is on an individual basis. Whilst this support may be helpful, it does not offer robust strategic oversight. It is recommended a governance model is considered and the school community consulted regarding this. Such a model would increase scrutiny arrangements and accountability. Such a model should include a lead within the governance structure for safeguarding.





Safeguarding Training and awareness	Regular safeguarding training takes place for all staff. This is clearly recorded on a training matrix. Training includes basic online safeguarding awareness when joining, an annual 3-hour refresher and a number of additional online safeguarding modules. It is recommended consideration is given to face to face training to complement the online learning. This would increase opportunities for staff to explore their understanding and ask questions. It is further recommended that regular ongoing CPD is used to explore contextual safeguarding issues. These can be delivered on a regular basis using 7-minute safeguarding briefings.
Single Central Record and Safer Recruitment	The Online SCR software is used to manage the Single Central Record. Whilst this did not evidence any concerns, there were some gaps identified in the electronic staff files. These require further auditing to ensure appropriate evidence is on all files. Appropriate recruitment checklists are in place. All staff are recruited via Elementa support services and initially start on a 12-week temporary contract before moving to a permanent contract. Elementa is externally audited by Affinity Workforce as part of their contract with the business. These are audited on a 3 monthly basis. The most recent audit from Affinity showed 97% compliance with the 3% for minor issues not impacting on safeguarding.
Safeguarding links to the curriculum	The school uses the Jigsaw scheme of work for PSHE. The PSHE lead is new to her role but has a clear understanding of the curriculum. PSHE is delivered twice per week and due to the mixed classes, is often delivered on a one-to-one basis when specific age-appropriate inputs are required. Picture news is used to support the curriculum and there is a strong focus on online safety. Children were able to articulate examples of how their learning helps them to keep safe. A curriculum roadmap has been created to add clarity to the curriculum coverage. It is recommended consideration is given to the resources within the school that promote learning and understand around diversity.





Summary	Safeguarding at Elmtree School is effective. There is a child centred ethos and children's needs are well understood with positive relationships and interventions observed. Appropriate policies, procedures and measures are in place to safeguard children, although require strengthening in some cases. Strengths: • Sharing of safeguarding information • Recording and escalation of concerns • Commitment and reflection from the leadership to continue to improve practice Areas for Development: • Analysis and scrutiny of attendance data • Recording arrangements for first aid and medical needs • Governance arrangements
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Recommendations:	1.	Review and risk assess area of playground identified as a potential risk for absconding from
	2.	Review pupil safeguarding monitoring arrangements to ensure all cases are RAG rated with Green cases reviewed at school level and Red and Amber cases prioritised for discussion at group DSL meeting
	3.	Ensure all safeguarding meeting discussions, outcomes and actions are recorded on CPOMS
	4.	Review reporting arrangements for low level concerns including consider the use of the bolt on CPOMS module (Staffsafe). Ensure details of the person reporting the concern are recorded
	5.	Ensure regular robust scrutiny and data analysis in relation to school attendance
	6.	Complete visit reports for SLT assurance visits to commissioned alternative provisions
	7.	Review Supervision arrangements to ensure supervision available for all members of the safeguarding team including the group DSL
	8.	Review training matrix to ensure focus on current year
	9.	Include 7-minute briefing as part of ongoing safeguarding CPD for staff
	10.	Review all electronic staff files to ensure there are no gaps in documentation
	11.	Review first aid recording arrangements and consider options available [such as medical tracker] to centralise all first aid and medical needs arrangements
	12.	Ensure pupil-based risk assessments are reviewed termly
	13.	Ensure asthma action plans are in place for those children with an asthma diagnosis.





	14.	Ensure any administration of medication is witnessed and signed for by two members of staff
	15.	Annually review healthcare forms and medication forms
	16.	Ensure Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans are in place for those children requiring support for evacuation
	17.	Ensure fire evacuation plan includes an option for a second evacuation point if required through a dynamic risk assessment
	18.	Ensure fire record book is appropriately completed with all drills and inspections of equipment
	19.	Consult with school community to simplify a shared vision for the school
	20.	Consider a governing body model to increase oversight and scrutiny



