



**News release:**

**Outcome of safeguarding investigation into Academy of Trinity**

A Council investigation into safeguarding concerns raised by the public about the Academy of Trinity, in Radstock, has summarised its findings. During November and December 2015, Bath & North East Somerset Council received an unprecedented number of calls and emails from parents, former parents, staff and former staff about the Academy of Trinity.

Although the Council is not responsible for the governance of the Academy of Trinity (it was at the time part of the Dove Family Academy Trust which was directly accountable to the Department for Education, DfE), the Council decided to intervene under its responsibilities for safeguarding the welfare of children, due to the concerns of parents and school staff. The calls primarily related to the actions of three ex-members of staff employed at the Academy until December 2015.

The Council's Safeguarding Team initiated an investigation with an independent investigator who carried out interviews with a number of parents, teachers and children, in addition to the information already received. The following themes were identified as being the most common over-arching areas of concern:

- Approaches to punishment
- Humiliation of children
- Neglect or ignoring of healthcare needs
- Bullying of children.

Following the thorough investigation, the Council's Safeguarding Team found that due to the historical nature of the concerns no incidents require immediate attention, but made the following conclusions:

1. There was a safeguarding risk at the Academy of Trinity during the period covered by the investigation. The new leadership of the Academy has acted swiftly and appropriately to address this.

2. A recommendation has been made to the Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board that further action be considered regarding one ex-member of staff.
3. There were systemic poor safeguarding practices in the Academy of Trinity over a sustained period which would indicate that there had been significant institutional failures.

The concerns identified in this investigation have been shared with Ofsted.

Since the time of the incidents under investigation, the Academy of Trinity has been placed under new leadership and has already undergone a significant DfE review of its governance. This has led to the Academy moving to be governed by another Multi-Academy Trust – the Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership. Bath & North East Somerset Council is in regular communication with the Partnership and Academy of Trinity and actions have already been taken by the new leadership to improve the safeguarding of all children. The Council has made further recommendations to the Academy and will continue to monitor the actions being taken in its safeguarding role.

The Council will be working with the Department for Education to help review and examine the current system of accountability for academies. The aim will be to ensure that lessons are learned that can help the wider system and prevent similar issues arising in the future.

The summary of the safeguarding investigation is being shared with parents. The full report will not be published in order to protect the identity of the children involved however it has been shared with the relevant statutory agencies.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

The investigation was undertaken in accordance with, and with reference to, the following legislative framework and guidance under which the Academy of Trinity and Council operate:

- Children Act 2004
- Education and Skills Act 2008
- Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulation 2014
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 – specifically in relation to managing allegations (chapter 2)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education – statutory guidance for schools and colleges 2015

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