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16 January 2017

Tony Chapman  
Mattishall Primary School  
Dereham Road  
Mattishall  
Dereham  
Norfolk  
NR20 3AA

Dear Mr Chapman

### **No formal designation monitoring inspection of Mattishall Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 14 December 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, aspects of the effectiveness of leadership and management in the school (including governance), and personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils at the school.

### **Evidence**

I scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements and met with you, the deputy headteacher, a group of pupils, parents, two governors, including the chair of the governing body, and the chair of the local authority's interim board.

I also scrutinised other documents, for example various reports from the local authority, including a safeguarding audit, governors' minutes and attendance records, and I undertook activities such as meetings with groups of parents and pupils. I spoke with pupils during their playtimes and lunchtimes and throughout the school day. During the inspection, I spoke with members of staff who are responsible for running the breakfast club and tea club and also a member of the office staff who has responsibility for updating the school's single central record. I

considered a letter that was given to me from a parent, and also the 66 responses from parents who completed Ofsted's online Parent View survey.

Having considered the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school's safeguarding arrangements are not effective.

## **Context**

There are currently 208 pupils on roll in the school. There is one class per year group. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below the national average and few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding is similar to the national average. This additional funding is for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are in the care of the local authority. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than the national average. However, the proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs, or an education, health and care plan is below average.

The school was previously inspected in July 2016 and was judged to be inadequate. Leadership and management (including the arrangements for safeguarding), and personal development, behaviour and welfare were judged to be inadequate.

Since the previous inspection, the local authority has provided enhanced support to the school leadership. The local authority exercised its statutory powers and removed the school's delegated budget. An improvement board was put in place, the chair of which is one of the local authority's senior advisers for intervention, education and inspection services. The chair of the governing body and one other governor form part of the interim board. A local authority performance officer is responsible for the headteacher's performance management arrangements.

## **Inspection findings**

### **Safeguarding**

The previous inspection identified a number of areas where the school's practices were insufficiently robust. The areas included ensuring that the designated senior leads are sufficiently knowledgeable and well trained to fulfil their roles effectively; ensuring that all statutory guidance for the safer recruitment of staff are adhered to; all staff are adequately trained to respond effectively to any child protection concerns through a rigorous school process, and records are appropriately maintained. The report also highlighted that the use of the additional funding to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils was not being used as effectively as it could be. Nor was the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities fully effective.

Working closely with the local authority, you have taken some steps to ensure that

these areas are beginning to be addressed. However, a follow-up safeguarding review brokered by the local authority found that there were still many gaps in the school's practices. My inspection visit confirms this still to be the case.

You and your deputy headteacher have put in place some additional processes and procedures which are not yet embedded and are inconsistently applied by all members of staff. During my visit, the majority of which was spent with you and your deputy headteacher, I shared with you the many examples of where practice is still ineffective and not rigorously monitored. For example, you have introduced a new system for signing in visitors to the school. However, it was clear from the visitors' book that this system is not consistently applied and, therefore, the very reason you put the process in place – to ensure that you know who is on site at all times – falls at the first hurdle. A checklist has been added to personnel files to ensure that all appropriate procedures are adhered to when recruiting staff. However, the files I viewed with your administrative assistant showed that the checks were inconsistently implemented, dates were incorrect, and ad hoc notes were added, with no signatures or dates. We highlighted together many such examples and the lackadaisical way in which these procedures have been put in place.

I am very concerned that your knowledge and skills are insufficiently honed to ensure that your role as designated safeguarding lead is effectively fulfilled. You do not regularly check on the effectiveness of the procedures you have introduced to keep pupils safe. On two separate occasions, I insisted that you complete a process, while I was on site, that had not been thorough and which referred to incomplete records of concerns. You are, therefore, failing to set the very best example to your most inexperienced teachers. These teachers' records already reflect the lax culture that still exists in the senior leadership team. Therefore, records of pupils' poor behaviour or bullying are not accurate, complete or timely. While it is recognised that no child is in immediate danger, the potential for this not to be the case is considerable.

The school's work to support the needs of children who are looked after and those who are disadvantaged is not as effective as it needs to be. Both of these groups and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are among the most vulnerable pupils in the school. The use of the considerable additional funding to support improved achievement of disadvantaged pupils is not yet effective. The impact of this additional funding is not well reported on the school's website, as is the requirement of the Department for Education (DfE). The school's latest assessment information shows that disadvantaged pupils across the school are making expected progress. However, progress of current Year 6 pupils lags behind others. If this continues, outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in 2017 will replicate the poor results of 2016.

The school works with the local authority's head of the virtual school, who has the responsibility to ensure that children looked after are supported well in school to

achieve the very best outcomes they can. The quality of the school's personal educational plans is not good enough. There are no targets against which good progress can be effectively measured. Some teachers are not aware of these plans and, therefore, do not know what their pupils should be working towards. It is vital that the provision for all pupils accurately reflects where they are, both in their learning and their emotional well-being. Little in the current personal education plans reflects either. Urgent work must be carried out to ensure that this is remedied.

It was a delight to meet your pupils. The performance they put on for parents on the morning of my visit was 'fabulous', as one parent said. I spoke with various pupils throughout the day and a separate group that you had arranged for me to meet during the morning. Pupils are polite and respectful of each other and adults. They are keen to talk to visitors and are clearly proud of their 'fantastic, fun school'. They know about all the different types of bullying and that it is 'something that happens constantly and is nasty'. They are confident that when issues arise, as indeed they have since September, they are quickly dealt with. However, they say they would like to know what happens to the person who bullies them or who is poorly behaved. When I asked what they would expect, they were clear that they would 'like all bullies to apologise to us'. Pupils also report that they feel safe and well cared for. However, they say that they feel less safe in the 'den building' of the school field and when other pupils are building 'dens'.

I took the opportunity to speak with many parents at the morning's Christmas performance of Years 3, 4 and 5. They are all very pleased with the school. They expressed their shock at the previous inspection report judgement. They say that the school's administrative procedures clearly need to be better but that 'it hasn't affected my children at all'. Some parents say that there is a tighter system for communicating with them regarding pupils' behaviour. They also say that concerns that they may have are largely dealt with quickly and well, not that your records would indicate this on many occasions.

Although the governing body is committed to improving the school and has many very experienced members, it has not held leaders to account sufficiently well for improvements to safeguarding arrangements. However, the governing body is now resolute in its determination to work with the local authority to effect the urgent improvements, particularly in leadership and management and safeguarding, which are still needed.

### **External support**

The enhanced support that the local authority has given since the school's previous inspection remains considerable. This has included audits of safeguarding procedures, undertaking the performance management of the headteacher and providing models of good practice for the governing body. However, the impact of this support is yet to be fully realised. As a result, the work to ensure that pupils are

safe has not been effective. The governing body, local authority and regional schools commissioner are moving forward with the school's transition to become a sponsored academy.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

Ensure that:

- the school's designated leads are supported, so that they undertake their roles effectively and are rigorously held to account for improvement in arrangements in safeguarding and child protection
- the personal education plans of children looked after are comprehensive and contain challenging, measurable education targets, and the provision that the local authority and the school provides is regularly checked for impact on pupils' achievement
- new systems for keeping children safe are rigorously and routinely monitored to check on their effectiveness
- reporting on the impact on pupil outcomes of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is regular, and leaders are held to account for the spend
- the school's website meets the requirements on the publication of specified information.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner, and the director of children's services for Norfolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Brock

**Her Majesty's Inspector**