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Mrs Elaine Dicocco
Interim Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Dicocco

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Kensworth Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 11 July 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the safeguarding arrangements at your school.

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.

Evidence

I scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. I met with you, the designated safeguarding leader, staff, pupils and the chair and three other members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. I spoke with the local authority school improvement partner by telephone.

During the inspection, I evaluated other relevant evidence gathered by the school in relation to safeguarding arrangements. A range of documents were scrutinised. These included: the local authority statement of action; local authority safeguarding audits; minutes of governors' meetings; attendance records and the updated school action plan.

We visited every class to observe pupils' behaviour. Together we considered the security of the site. I also observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtime.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

Context

Kensworth Church of England Primary School is much smaller than the average primary school. The school currently has 85 pupils on roll. The number of disadvantaged pupils is slightly less than the national average. However, the percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national figure.

In October 2016, you were appointed by the governing body as interim headteacher to replace the previous headteacher. The school is fully staffed with one new class teacher and one new teaching assistant since the inspection in September 2016.

In September 2016, the school was judged to be inadequate and placed into special measures due to ineffective leadership of safeguarding practices. Consequently, this inspection focused on the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and the impact of leaders' work to improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare.

Main findings

Since the inspection in September, you have worked hard to improve the school safeguarding procedures that were identified as inadequate in the inspection report. You have received effective support from the local authority to ensure that safeguarding is now secure.

Records of staff recruitment are compliant with statutory requirements and reviewed regularly. You have worked swiftly to address the recommendations in the local authority review. As a consequence, all areas of safer recruitment are now embedded in the school's procedures.

You have ensured that all staff have received robust safeguarding training. You have inserted a series of safeguarding updates within the school calendar to ensure that all staff are aware of new information. You have also ensured that all staff have received training in the government's 'Prevent' duty. You have also included safeguarding on the agenda of every staff and governor meeting.

The designated safeguarding lead has worked tirelessly to secure a more effective system for recording child protection concerns. The revised system ensures that child protection concerns are recorded in a timely manner and focused on the needs of the child. You have also centralised all documentation regarding child protection to ensure that no information is missed. You are aware of the importance of frequent reviews of the new system and the need to be vigilant in ensuring that all information is clear and comprehensive. However, there is still some additional work needed to ensure absolute clarity of information in some areas of record-keeping.

You have also worked hard to ensure that vulnerable pupils receive appropriate educational and social and emotional support. However, the local authority virtual headteacher has not been involved in supporting this provision.

Governors acted swiftly to address the issues identified in the previous section 5 inspection. The local authority has been instrumental in providing support and capacity to meet safeguarding requirements. Commissioned by governors, the local authority has reviewed the security and safety of the school site and made important suggestions. As a consequence, the school site is now a secure and safe environment. Governors are vigilant in reviewing health and safety procedures and conduct termly checks. Governors have also worked hard in collaboration with the local authority to establish robust risk assessments for each area of the school and curriculum.

I saw a great deal of evidence that governors are now able to hold the school leadership to account for the safety and well-being of pupils. Governors visit the school regularly to gather information about the quality of safeguarding procedures. Governors ask challenging questions about the rigour with which the school keeps pupils safe. Safeguarding is now a standard agenda item in governor meetings so that governors can remain alert to changes to safeguarding procedures. Governors also communicate to parents the ways in which the school is addressing the areas for improvement.

You and other leaders have raised the profile and importance of safeguarding within the school. All staff have been better trained to recognise potential safeguarding issues. You have worked hard to establish safeguarding within the culture of the school. Safeguarding is a standard agenda item in all staff meetings and weekly updates. Staff have responded well to the new system of reporting concerns. However, you and your leadership team must continue to stress the importance of all staff reporting their concerns swiftly.

During this inspection, pupils explained how staff helped to keep them safe. They spoke about the ways in which staff ensured that bullying was not tolerated and dealt with swiftly and effectively. They also spoke articulately about the school behaviour policy and how teachers were skilled in managing pupil misbehaviour. Pupils spoke of how safe they now felt within the newly secured school site. Pupils spoke of how the school supported their social and emotional development through class activities. For example, Year 5 explore concepts such as 'what makes a great listener' to support pupils' social skills. Year 3 pupils study the importance of healthy eating in maintaining their physical well-being.

Pupils have a strong understanding of the role and importance of e-safety. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe when online. You and your leadership team have secured a heightened focus on e-safety in the computing curriculum. External presentations about the dangers of the internet have further strengthened pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves safe, both within school and beyond.

Pupils behave very well in class. They are kind, friendly and support each other's learning. They are sensitive to the needs of others. They move around the school safely and respond appropriately to school rules. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils respond accordingly. Pupils explained how they could identify an adult to talk to if they had any concerns.

Attendance has improved with girls' attendance in line with national averages but boys' attendance is still below. Recognising that attendance was an issue, you have introduced a range of strategies such as constant celebration of pupils' attendance in school newsletters, attendance certificates and attendance badges. It is too early to measure the impact of these new measures.

External support

The school currently relies on the support of the local authority to provide school improvement and safeguarding advice and guidance. This additional support is proving effective as safeguarding arrangements are now fit for purpose.

The school has received two external audits from the local authority to improve the practices and process around employment and child protection. The Diocese of St Albans Multi-Academy Trust has also conducted a safeguarding review in preparation for the school joining the trust in Autumn 2017. School leaders have put in place the recommendations swiftly so that pupils are kept safe.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that governors continue to develop a systematic approach to reviewing all policies around safeguarding at the school.
- Record all relevant information on child protection records so that leaders continue to demonstrate that outcomes focus on the best interest of the child.
- Continue to develop a strong culture of safeguarding so that all staff fully understand their role in child protection.
- Ensure that the school accesses external support, such as from the virtual school, to meet its statutory responsibilities in supporting children looked after.

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

Yours sincerely

Susan Aykin
Her Majesty's Inspector