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6 September 2017

Miss Helen Appleton  
Head of School  
Burnt Yates Church of England Voluntary Aided (Endowed) Primary School  
Burnt Yates  
Harrogate  
North Yorkshire  
HG3 3EJ

Dear Miss Appleton

**No formal designation monitoring inspection of Burnt Yates Church of England Voluntary Aided (Endowed) Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 18 July 2017, 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 at the school.

**Evidence**

I scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. I also examined documents relating to governance and records of visits from the local authority. I met with you and the executive headteacher at various times during the inspection. I held discussions with several members of the governing body, two teachers, all of the key stage 2 pupils, a representative from the local authority and the deputy director of the diocese. Several parents and carers kindly shared their views about the school with me as they dropped their children off at the beginning of the school day.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

## **Context**

Burnt Yates Church of England Voluntary Aided (Endowed) Primary School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school, with just 24 pupils currently on roll. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils are in receipt of the pupil premium or have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school works in collaboration with Ripley Endowed CE School, until recently sharing the same executive headteacher, but with separate governing bodies.

The school was placed in special measures following the inspection that took place in December 2016. Safeguarding was judged to be ineffective. Since this time, there has been considerable instability in staffing. The interim executive headteacher left the school in June and was replaced by another temporary executive headteacher and a head of school, both of whom lead and manage, on a permanent basis, another North Yorkshire primary school. Governors have appointed a replacement temporary headteacher to take over from September 2017. Almost all staff in the school have fixed-term contracts.

An academy order is in place. A sponsor has not been found and the diocese, in discussion with the regional schools commissioner, is considering options for the future of the school.

## **Inspection findings**

Not everyone in the school community, following the inspection, accepted the judgements of Her Majesty's Inspector regarding the failings in safeguarding, believing weaknesses to be of little significance and that children were safe. The school's response was not sufficiently rapid nor robust. It became evident in the months following the inspection that, although leaders were taking action to improve the school, this was not having the required impact. It is only very recently that safeguarding can be considered effective. Along with the executive headteacher, in the short time available, you have taken a root and branch approach to checking safeguarding, substantially strengthening arrangements. You have brought new clarity about the roles and responsibilities of adults, and have staff pulling together in the right direction.

You have taken action to ensure that all the required checks have been made on adults working or volunteering in the school and that the statutory record of these checks is accurate. The school administrator has attended training and gone the extra mile to increase her knowledge and understanding of the legal requirements. Leaders have had training in safer recruitment and follow guidance closely. The chair of governors recognises the need to update her safer recruitment training. It is not clear which other governors have been trained in safer recruitment practice.

You have introduced a systematic induction schedule to ensure that any future appointees receive clear instructions about their specific safeguarding duties. Records show that all staff have undertaken safeguarding training and have read essential

documents. You have strengthened adults' knowledge further through additional training since your arrival at the school. Adults know how to report, and to whom, any concerns they may have about a pupil. Though you and the executive headteacher, as the designated safeguarding leaders, are not always on the school site, you are always available and respond with urgency to any concerns that staff raise. You have revised policies so they are up to date and compliant with statutory guidance.

Following the inspection, leaders rectified weaknesses in the records of child protection concerns and ensured that records were kept securely. You have further strengthened procedures, taking a more meticulous approach. In addition, you have carefully reviewed the circumstances of each child for whom there is a record of concerns.

You have properly reviewed the security of the school site, carefully considered risks and put control measures in place. Alert adults, strategically placed and easily visible, supervise pupils well in the school grounds. You commissioned an external fire safety audit when you arrived. You have reviewed all risk assessments, recognising that some were more general than specific, and begun to sharpen these.

A review of governance that the local authority conducted took place rather late. It recognised some strengths but also substantial weaknesses in governance. Because of the lateness of this review, governors are only just beginning to respond to the clear recommendations it makes. The chair of governors clearly understands the seriousness of the safeguarding duties of the governing body, but not all governors understand their duties or the significance of them.

The named governor for safeguarding has made numerous visits to the school to check arrangements. However, no records of these checks were available during the inspection and there is little evidence in the minutes of meetings of the governing body of a systematic approach to checking safeguarding. Governors recognise the need to ask more challenging questions with greater tenacity until they are completely satisfied that practice is robust. They were clearly not happy about the quality of information they received from leaders prior to the departure of the interim executive headteacher in June and appropriately raised concerns about the quality of leadership, sharing these concerns with the local authority.

### **External support**

The local authority rightly identified the slow rate of improvement as it reviewed progress against the milestone measures in its statement of action, which is fit for purpose. The local authority was successful in appointing, albeit in the short term, leaders that are more effective. However, the local authority was not effective in its earlier challenge and support of the school. For example, along with governors, representatives of the local authority accepted a much-delayed safeguarding audit that was not sufficiently rigorous. This audit was carried out by the school, which was in effect checking its own work, when it would have been more judicious to secure an objective, external view. The diocese has been working hard, with the local authority, to find solutions to the

future leadership, potential partnerships and sponsorship of the school.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Ensure that governors respond with urgency to the recommendations contained in the review of governance, are more systematic in checking safeguarding arrangements and challenge leaders more robustly.

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

Yours sincerely

Philip Riozzi  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**