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Mrs Amanda Szewczyk-Radley
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Szewczyk-Radley

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Clerkenwell Parochial CofE Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 26–27 September 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the school's most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in December 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During this inspection I held meetings with you and other school leaders, the chair of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and an adviser from the Diocese of London. I also met with the chief executive officer of the London Diocesan Board for Schools (LDBS) multi-academy trust, which the school is expected to join. I held meetings with groups of pupils and staff. I observed lessons in mathematics, some jointly, as well as observing pupils at break and lunchtime. I evaluated a wide variety of safeguarding documentation, including: a range of risk assessments, school policies, attendance information, case files, provision for pupils who have medical needs, the single central record of pre-employment checks, external audits of safeguarding and minutes of the governing body.

The local authority's statement of action and the school's action plan were evaluated.

Context

There have been significant changes in school leadership since the previous inspection. The previous headteacher left the school, after a period of absence, in August 2017. You were appointed interim headteacher from 1 September 2017. A new assistant headteacher and a new leader for mathematics also started in September 2017. The governing body has appointed a deputy headteacher who will take up post in January 2018.

The school is expected to become an academy on 1 November 2017. The school is planned to join the LDBS multi-academy trust.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

While there have been improvements, many of the weaknesses that caused the school to be judged as having serious weaknesses at the last inspection still remain. During the inspection, you agreed with the concerns that I raised. Although action plans are fit for purpose, there has been insufficient progress overall to ensure that safeguarding is effective.

The areas that remain weak are:

- the leadership, monitoring and evaluation of safeguarding activities across the school – the governing body has not ensured that improvements made shortly after the previous inspection have been sustained
- staff not keeping accurate and comprehensive records of child protection concerns
- the inconsistent application of school policies that affect the safety of pupils, including how staff assess and manage risks to pupils in the playground.

Since you took up your post just over two weeks ago, you recognised a range of concerns about the school's work. You prioritised improving pupils' behaviour, including their ability to behave safely in the corridors and stairwells. This was because pupils' behaviour had worsened in the summer term. Pupils told me about how the changes have helped improve their behaviour. This includes the 'line ups' after break and lunch time. 'Line ups' are ensuring that pupils walk to and from their classrooms quietly and safely.

Rules about the use of the playground are inconsistently applied. For example, I saw adults not intervening when key stage 1 pupils were running around while eating. Another example is when pupils, including groups of pupils, run around the school's small playground without considering the risks to themselves or other pupils. Pupils told me that they worry about their safety in the playground. Records show a high number of minor first-aid incidents in the playground. Leaders have not monitored the number of incidents and have not considered them in how they

assess risks in the playground. You recognise that the use of the playground needs to be reviewed urgently to ensure that it is a safe environment for pupils. You are also reviewing the procedures for managing situations and reviewing risks when pupils leave the classroom on their own, for example to access the water fountain or to go to the toilet.

Leaders have successfully improved the management of pupils' medical needs, including in the early years. Communication of pupils' needs is secure and well thought through. Staff have detailed information on pupils' needs and they know what to do when any intervention is required. Leaders check and update medical information regularly. Staff record any use of medication carefully. The school's systems for managing attendance, including for vulnerable pupils, are also well managed.

Since your appointment, leaders have drawn up new risk assessments for the off-site physical education activities. These include more careful consideration of the route walked by pupils and their individual needs. You have not allowed any external visits to take place until you review how risks are assessed on these visits. This is because risk assessments for visits that took place in the last school year and after the previous inspection were of variable quality.

The governing body arranged for an external audit of safeguarding in March 2017. This gave confidence that the changes leaders made after the inspection were improving the effectiveness of safeguarding. However, there has been insufficient monitoring since this audit. The governing body has not ensured that detailed checking has taken place. For example, there were plans to have a group of governors or an additional governor to support in monitoring safeguarding. Neither happened. Also, when the previous headteacher was absent for some of the summer term, the arrangements quickly declined for ensuring that safeguarding was effective. The governing body did not arrange for effective support or monitoring for those staff leading safeguarding during this period. The governing body has not updated a number of the safeguarding policies, as it should have done, including the off-site visits policy.

I also found when reviewing child protection records that the same issues identified at the previous inspection remain. Staff are not keeping records accurately or comprehensively. You agreed that this is not acceptable. You decided during the first day of this inspection to bring forward your plans to re-organise the leadership and management of safeguarding. There is an urgent need to review leaders' different roles and responsibilities to ensure that leaders are confident in their ability to deal with and monitor safeguarding concerns effectively.

The new leaders overseeing mathematics have quickly identified the successes and weaknesses in the teaching of mathematics. They have pulled together an appropriate list of actions that need to happen moving forward. The small number of most-able pupils all achieved the high standard in mathematics in the end of key

stage 2 examinations in 2017. Leaders have not yet had time to analyse the progress of most-able pupils in other year groups. The lessons visited during the inspection raised no concerns in relation to pupils' behaviour. I agreed with the evaluations of learning made by the leader in relation to the teaching we observed and the pupils' work that we looked at. In short, there is a need for teachers to challenge the most able pupils more, particularly in developing their problem-solving and reasoning skills.

The external review of governance recommended at the previous inspection has not happened. This was due to anticipation of the academy order after the serious weaknesses judgement from the previous inspection. External support provided by the local authority and diocese of London was successful in the period immediately after the inspection, for example in relation to advice in shaping action plans to address the areas for improvement. There was a review of safeguarding in March 2017 and of behaviour in June 2017. The diocese put in place a consultant headteacher for the last two weeks of the summer term. However, there has been insufficient overall support since the previous inspection to ensure that safeguarding is effective at the time of this monitoring inspection.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgement was made:

Leaders and managers are not taking effective action towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

- Leaders must urgently strengthen the leadership and monitoring of safeguarding to ensure that the roles and responsibilities of those working to ensure that pupils are safe are clearly defined and understood.

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

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

Yours sincerely

Sam Hainey

Her Majesty's Inspector