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30 November 2018

Mr Nathan Clark  
Acting Headteacher  
Oakington CofE VA Primary School  
Water Lane  
Oakington  
Cambridge  
Cambridgeshire  
CB24 3AL

Dear Mr Clark

### **No formal designation inspection of Oakington CofE VA Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 21 November 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This 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 and the impact on the personal development and welfare of pupils at the school.

### **Evidence**

I scrutinised a wide range of information relating to safeguarding and pupils' welfare. This included the single central record of pre-employment checks made on staff and other documents relating to child protection arrangements. Documentation around attendance, behaviour records and risk assessments were considered. I analysed information from governors' minutes of meetings and safeguarding visits from the local authority that have occurred since the previous inspection in July 2018.

I held meetings with you, the newly contracted interim executive headteacher, and representatives of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body, the local authority and staff.

Together, we visited every class to observe pupils' learning and their welfare

arrangements. Playtime was also observed. I spoke informally to pupils in class and I selected some pupils to talk to in a group.

The views of parents were taken from 56 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. A parental email sent directly to Ofsted during the inspection was also considered.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

### **Context**

The school created a federation with Dry Drayton Primary School in January 2018 and has one governing body for both schools. The school is due to become an academy with the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust in spring 2019.

In July 2018, the school was judged to be inadequate with serious weaknesses. This was due to ineffective leadership of safeguarding practices and procedures. This inspection focused on the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and the impact of leaders' work to improve pupils' personal development and welfare.

Since the previous inspection in July 2018, there has been a significant change in the school's leadership. In October 2018, the federation's executive headteacher retired. The governing body has contracted an interim executive headteacher from a different federation to oversee both schools in the federation. Previously the deputy headteacher, you took up your post as acting headteacher in October 2018.

### **Main findings**

Since the previous inspection leaders have taken appropriate action to improve safeguarding processes and procedures. Safeguarding documentation is more rigorous than that which was previously seen. Leaders, governors and the local authority have established clear priorities. Leaders continue to work successfully through the agreed action plan to ensure that nothing slips back in terms of child protection and pupils' welfare arrangements. The progress the school is now making to develop a deep culture of safeguarding is moving at pace.

Leaders have made sure that staff are appropriately trained in effective safeguarding practice. Staff spoken with confirm that that this training has been beneficial and covers the latest safeguarding guidance. Staff have received their training in the 'Prevent' duty and understand their responsibilities well. Staff are positive about the changes that have taken place. They stated that they 'have been a long way behind' but they are having their confidence restored. They support the new leadership and willingly take on the new systems that have been introduced.

Leaders have improved the way records regarding child protection and welfare are kept. While the system has only been recently implemented, improved information is now available to ensure that concerns about behaviour or child protection are swiftly identified and acted upon. Staff are using the new system consistently and concerns are appropriately logged. Leaders have not yet analysed the information provided to determine patterns of concerns or if additional external support for pupils is required.

The governing body has reflected on the outcome of the previous inspection and governors say that 'there are lessons [they] can and should learn'. Governors are dedicated and are working effectively with the local authority to swiftly improve the effectiveness of the school's leadership. Following the recent governance review, they are now working on the action points that were raised.

Governors regularly visit to review the school's work to safeguard pupils. However, they do not have a systematic approach to carefully reviewing and updating policies. Some important policies on the website still require updating and do not reflect the improved practice or correct names of personnel currently in the school. Parents have been communicated with and appropriately informed when changes have taken place via school newsletters, but the differing range of information found on the website is confusing.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development are improving. Pupils are positive about the changes that have happened over this term. They have a secure understanding of the new behaviour system leaders have introduced and appreciate the 'three rights'. Pupils report that adults apply the system fairly. Pupils told me that the wearing of school uniform is important to them and appreciate the focus that, as leaders, you are giving to this aspect of school life.

Pupils spoken with are clear that bullying is not an issue. They have an age-appropriate understanding of what bullying is and what it is not, including in relation to the use of online technologies. Pupils have confidence that when a disagreement occurs, an adult will deal with it. This is an improvement on the previous inspection.

The school is regaining parents' confidence. In this inspection, 90% of parents who responded to Parent View agreed that their children feel safe at school. The proportion of parents who would recommend the school has also increased. Where parents express concerns, evidence shows that you have taken their views seriously and deal with issues quickly. As leaders and governors, you are taking swift action to make sure that the vision for a safe and secure environment is realised. For example, where you have recently not been pleased with the content of information from some external speakers at the school, you have taken decisive action to change. You are ensuring that pupils are provided with a balanced view in assemblies that is suitable for their age and abilities.

Leaders and governors have placed a high priority on making sure pupils attend

school regularly. Effective systems exist to do so. Suitable support is provided for pupils whose attendance falls below your high expectations. Lateness is being reduced through positive measures such as the early bird trophy.

First aid training and recording of accidents are in place and suitable. Leaders are starting to analyse incidents to see if there are any patterns from minor injuries that could be further reduced.

Risks are assessed well when pupils are on school trips or outside school activities. However, some records of internal risk assessments have not been updated. Leaders are responding appropriately and swiftly to the areas for improvement identified in a recent external audit of health and safety at the school. One pupil commented, 'We are a bit messy.' Leaders took this view on board and are in the process of clearing the site of old or redundant equipment.

Leaders and governors are working with the local authority to ensure that the single central register and all staff records are in line with new procedures and processes. However, updating records of the suitable recruitment of staff remains a work in progress. This is because, as identified in the previous inspection, some previous records and evidence are not available. Where required, you have correctly made sure suitable risk assessments are in place. New staff employed at the school have been appropriately checked.

### **External support**

The local authority is currently providing the school with extensive support. It has supported governors in contracting an interim executive headteacher to oversee the work of the schools in the federation on a weekly basis. The local authority has an effective action plan in place. Representatives visit regularly and work effectively with leaders and the governing body to ensure that the areas from the previous inspection are dealt with quickly.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Continue to improve the rigour of all aspects of safeguarding, particularly risk assessments and updating recruitment information.
- Implement a systematic approach to reviewing of safeguarding policies so they are in line with the school's practice.
- Analyse information from the new behaviour and welfare system to identify patterns and further improvements.
- Continue to develop the culture of safeguarding so that all staff fully understand and play their part in providing a safe environment in which all pupils can learn.

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

Yours sincerely

Kim Hall  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**