

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



4 July 2019

Mr Hugh Greenwood  
Headteacher  
Wainscott Primary School  
Wainscott Road  
Wainscott  
Rochester  
Kent  
ME2 4JX

Dear Mr Greenwood

### **Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Wainscott Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 11 June 2019, 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 March 2019. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

The inspection focused on the areas for improvement relating to safeguarding. I held separate meetings with members of the senior team, the inclusion team, which is led by the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), a group of staff, and a group of pupils from Years 3 to 6. Telephone calls were made to the local authority's designated officer and to the chair of the governing body. The statement of action and the school's action plan were evaluated. I reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding, records of checks made on staff when they were appointed, and documents relating to the work of governance. I also reviewed three letters received from current pupils, one letter from an ex-pupil and four letters from parents.

## **Context**

A new inclusion team has been created. This team includes the SENCo, who was appointed in May 2019, an ex-local authority consultant who works part time for the school, and a teaching assistant who is temporarily taking on the family link role. A new chair of the governing body was appointed last month and has been in post for three weeks.

## **The quality of leadership and management at the school**

Leaders, teachers and assistants have introduced a number of effective new approaches in order to implement the areas for improvement outlined in the previous inspection report. They have strengthened safeguarding systems and processes and also delivered training to staff on a number of different aspects of safeguarding. Due to the improvements in the leadership of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), the provision for this group of pupils, many of whom are very vulnerable, is now more effective. Leaders and governors acknowledge that despite these successful and wide-ranging improvements, a strong safeguarding culture is not yet established throughout the school. They are planning further improvements to ensure that all staff have a nuanced and deep understanding of safeguarding which informs the decisions they make. In addition, leaders' and governors' oversight of safeguarding is not yet stringent enough. There are carefully considered plans in place to improve this.

The local authority has produced a suitable statement of action which dovetails well with the school's action plan. The school's action plan links very closely to the areas for improvement from the previous inspection report. Many planned actions are allocated to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) for implementation. The DSL also monitors the plan, checking on the progress and efficacy of actions taken. This crossover in roles means that the oversight of the plan is not objective enough. Governors have requested that another member of the senior leadership team is allocated to the DSL role. This change had not been actioned at the time of the monitoring visit. The oversight of safeguarding is not yet rigorous enough. As a result, the overall safeguarding culture is not sufficiently strong.

The local authority has worked closely with the school to ensure that the areas for improvement are fully implemented. For example, it has commissioned an external safeguarding audit, which has now been carried out. The audit clearly identified aspects of safeguarding where improvements have been effective, as well as some specific procedures and practice that need further development. The headteacher has taken on board the recommendations from the safeguarding audit and has a detailed plan to implement them going forward. In addition, the headteacher has commissioned an external safeguarding audit and drawn up a detailed action plan in response to its recommendations.

One area that has improved is the way that safeguarding concerns are dealt with.

The procedures that staff use when they have a concern about a pupil are now much tighter. For example, leaders have introduced new methods for recording concerns about pupils, which require staff to indicate what actions they have taken in response to these concerns. Leaders have systematically ensured that all staff receive training about using the new recording method. Administrative managers have also undertaken extensive work to ensure that all the checks made on staff when they are appointed are properly collated in a single central record. This record is now fully compliant. Administrative assistants and managers have also carefully reviewed employment files for all staff and made sure that they contain the necessary information. In addition, the newly formed inclusion team, led by the SENCo, has successfully developed the assistance it provides for pupils and their families. For instance, there is a greater focus on making sure that pupils who have mental health issues receive the support they need. During the inspection, teaching staff commented on the positive impact that the inclusion team was having on the provision for pupils who have additional needs, including children looked after and pupils with SEND.

All staff have also undertaken training on a range of safeguarding issues, such as dealing with radicalisation and preventing extremism. The extensive training that staff have undertaken, including some online training, means that they now know their statutory duties regarding safeguarding. However, some aspects of safeguarding training are not fully embedded. Leaders have not given staff enough direction about the safeguarding issues that are most relevant to the school and how to apply the training meaningfully to their own context.

During the inspection, parents and carers commented very favourably on the leadership of the school and the improvements in safeguarding arrangements, with a number writing letters to the inspector in praise of the school. However, a very small minority of parents feel that their concerns, including safeguarding concerns, are not dealt with appropriately. Governors acknowledge that their oversight of safeguarding, including complaints raised by parents, needs to develop further. However, other aspects of governance have improved well. For example, the new chair of the governing body has ensured that safeguarding is discussed in detail at full governing body meetings. Minutes from meetings show that governors ask leaders challenging questions about the actions they have taken in relation to safeguarding. The review of governance has not yet been undertaken but plans are under way for one to be commissioned.

Pupils told the inspector that they feel safe when at the school and that any bullying is dealt with well by teachers. Some pupils raised concerns about the behaviour of a minority of pupils, which may be influenced by social media or other forms of media. Teachers and leaders are also aware that some pupils are accessing inappropriate online content outside of school, including through social media. Leaders have rightly focused on e-safety issues. For example, the subject lead for computing has produced a leaflet for parents about online safety and the school has run workshops for both parents and pupils about how to stay safe when online.

However, approaches in response to the different concerns raised by parents, pupils and teachers are not sufficiently joined up to other aspects of improvement, including the safeguarding culture.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

Leaders and managers are taking effective actions towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

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 regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Medway. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Hubbard

**Her Majesty's Inspector**