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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Miss Louise Aston (Acting Headteacher)
Rothwell Haigh Road Infant School
Haigh Road
Rothwell
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS26 0NQ

Dear Miss Aston

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Rothwell Haigh Road Infant School

Following my visit to your school on 26 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 October 2018. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with you as the acting headteacher, the chair of the governing body and the vice-chair who also has responsibility for safeguarding. A telephone interview was held with the team manager of the local authority's education safeguarding team. I met with the school's designated officers for safeguarding, with the premises manager and with groups of staff and pupils. I spoke to 10 parents and carers informally before the start of the school day. The local authority's statement of action and the school's action plan were evaluated.

I evaluated several documents relating to safeguarding, including attendance, behaviour and exclusion records, health and safety documents, school policies and evidence of work with external agencies. I also evaluated governors' minutes and external safeguarding audits. I observed pupils' behaviour before school, in parts of lessons, during break and at lunchtime.

Context

There have been substantial changes to the school's leadership arrangements since the last inspection. The headteacher resigned from her post and the chair of the governing body also resigned, along with several other governors. As the deputy headteacher, you have taken on the role of acting headteacher since October 2018.

The local authority took swift and decisive action to ensure that the school's safeguarding arrangements improved as a matter of urgency. Ofsted recently judged children's services in Leeds to be outstanding, and the education safeguarding team provided effective support to guide you and other school leaders to make the necessary improvements quickly. The local authority also provided effective support by finding a very experienced chair and vice-chair of governors to take over the leadership of the governing body.

The regional schools commissioner took the decision to issue an academy order and to close this school on Sunday 30 June. The school will reopen on Monday 1 July as part of Cockburn Multi-Academy Trust. For this reason, this monitoring inspection did not evaluate the school's progress against the other areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report. The single focus of this inspection was to evaluate whether safeguarding is effective.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Since you took on the role of acting headteacher, you have worked tirelessly to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and the pupils in this school are safe.

You are very well supported by two deputy designated officers and you share information appropriately within the safeguarding team. You have also improved the way that information is shared with colleagues in the junior school when pupils move up to Year 3. All staff have received safeguarding training and they know how to recognise signs that pupils are at risk of potential harm. You have raised awareness among pupils and staff, and you have gained the trust and confidence of the whole staff team. There is a strong culture of safeguarding at this school.

You have transformed the system of keeping accurate records and individual pupils' safeguarding files are exemplary. The front cover sheets include a detailed chronology and all contact details are readily to hand. This helps the three designated officers for safeguarding to work seamlessly together. Local procedures are followed correctly and there is evidence of leaders working well with professional partners outside of the school. Records of safeguarding leaders' frequent supervision meetings note actions that are needed to make sure that pupils get the extra help they need quickly. These actions are taken promptly and then signed and dated. The quality of safeguarding record-keeping is meticulous.

Several staff and governors have had safer recruitment training and detailed checks are made to ensure that all staff and other adults are suitable to work with children. I spoke with staff at the breakfast club and at lunchtime about their safeguarding training. All adults are well trained, and they have a good understanding of how to keep pupils who have additional medical needs, including special dietary requirements, safe. Staff have been given specialist training from healthcare professionals to ensure that pupils with additional medical needs, for example those who are insulin-dependent, are cared for safely. Pupils who are in the 'food ambassador' team were very proud to tell me how much they know about how food affects some pupils' safety.

Leaders have designed a curriculum that ensures that pupils understand how to keep themselves safe when they are outside or on the internet. Carefully chosen picture books tell stories that help embed this learning for even the youngest children. The internet ambassadors told me about the rules they have made up themselves that are displayed around school. Pupils also shared age-appropriate books with me, such as 'Troll Stinks', by Jeanne Willis and Tony Ross, that have helped them understand the pressures of online bullying. Pupils told me that there is no bullying at this school and that if anyone is unkind, the teachers sort it out quickly.

Parents are pleased with the many improvements you have made to site security since the last inspection. You carefully analyse all accident records, including spotting patterns linked to trip hazards within the grounds. Pupils play at the front of the school building, which borders a busy main road. To ensure pupils' safety, the gate is now locked before and unlocked after breaktime and lunchtime. The premises manager keeps detailed records of all health and safety audits and checks, and he tests the fire alarm weekly. Fire safety audit and training records show that although leaders have requested fire warden training, a course has not yet become available. Leaders intend to ensure that key members of staff attend this mandatory training at the earliest available opportunity.

The chair of the governing body holds accreditation as a national leader of governance. Under his leadership, the governing body has increased the level of challenge to school leaders. Minutes of their meetings show that governors ask probing questions to challenge information provided by leaders in safeguarding reports. Governors also seek external audits to verify the information provided to them by school leaders. A recent report to governors by the local authority education safeguarding team commended the 'tremendous amount of progress' leaders have made in improving the quality of pupils' safeguarding records.

Governors have worked closely with the multi-academy trust during this transition period. The multi-academy trust asked national leaders of education to undertake a complete audit of the school's safeguarding arrangements in March 2019. This report was provided by the multi-academy trust for scrutiny by the governing body. Leaders have worked diligently to successfully address any outstanding actions

identified in that audit report.

Following this 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.

Safeguarding is effective.

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

Yours sincerely

Tracey Ralph

Her Majesty's Inspector