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10 July 2020

Mrs Alana Brown  
Headteacher  
Eynesbury CofE Primary School  
Eynesbury  
St Neots  
Cambridgeshire  
PE19 2TD

Dear Mrs Brown

### **No formal designation inspection of Eynesbury CofE Primary School**

Following my visit with Kim Hall, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 9 July 2020, 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 no formal designation (NFD) inspections. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector wished to determine the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements at the school, as serious concerns had been raised with Ofsted.

We do not give graded judgements on NFD inspections. This visit has raised serious concerns about the effectiveness of the school's work to safeguard pupils and the oversight and scrutiny of leaders. Under normal circumstances, we would have immediately treated this NFD inspection as a full section 5 inspection. However, due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, I am recommending that the next inspection of this school is a section 5 inspection and is brought forward once routine inspection resumes.

### **Evidence**

We scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. We met with the you, including in your role as the designated safeguarding lead, two deputy designated safeguarding leaders, six members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, two groups of staff, three representatives of the local authority and the member of staff responsible for maintaining the single central record. We scrutinised other

documents, including two local authority safeguarding audits, the minutes of governors' meetings and several school policies relating to safeguarding.

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

safeguarding is not effective.

## **Context**

The school is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is below average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is in line with the national average. The current headteacher was appointed as interim headteacher (part time) in September 2019. She was appointed as substantive headteacher in January 2020. Apart from this, there is a stable staff team. During this period of COVID-19, the school is open to vulnerable pupils and children of key workers, as well as pupils from Reception and Year 1.

## **Main Findings**

The governing body does not hold leaders to account for how the school keeps pupils safe from harm. Governors do not have adequate oversight because they have a poor understanding of their role in ensuring that safeguarding is effective. The local authority review of safeguarding in October 2019 identified these weaknesses in the effectiveness of the governing body. Some governors subsequently attended a training session facilitated by the local authority. However, their understanding remains weak. Some governors have not had sight of the outcome of the safeguarding review and are therefore unaware of the actions they need to take to improve things. There are no plans to address the areas of concern, which were raised in the audit, or to consider past events and learn from them.

There is insufficient focus on safeguarding in the school's improvement plans. The role of the named governor for safeguarding is unclear. It was not entirely clear to governors during the inspection who on the governing body is responsible for this area of work. Safeguarding is now a standing agenda item for governing body meetings. However, governors have set no expectations for the headteacher. They rely on the headteacher's experience to report to them, rather than making clear what they need to know to assure themselves that safeguarding is effective.

Since the headteacher joined the school, she has made some improvements to the safeguarding procedures at the school. These improvements are appropriate. She reports that the child protection records were previously disorganised and poorly kept. This has improved. The records are now well organised and stored securely. The roles of the deputy designated leads for safeguarding are developing to ensure that they now take a fuller part in safeguarding reviews and decision-making. However, this work is in its infancy.

The headteacher is clear that the teaching of pupils in issues of safeguarding requires further work. Too much of what pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe happens in one-off and unrelated events, rather than being developed through a well-planned curriculum. She has plans to address this when all pupils return to school in September 2020.

Staff are clear about the procedures to report any safeguarding concerns. They know what to do if they are concerned about a pupil's welfare. The system used for reporting information is clear and staff adhere to it.

Despite recent and ongoing training, staff have too narrow a view of the potential dangers to pupils. They have not considered how their training applies in the context of the school. Wider risks in the local community are not properly thought through. Staff are unaware of how the risks of radicalisation might apply in their locality or the dangers associated with county lines drug dealing. This limits the staff's ability to spot some of the signs of potential harm to pupils and to identify those at risk. Records show that some members of staff have not completed the required training. It is unclear how leaders have followed this up to ensure that all staff are well trained. Some members of staff are unsure about accessing the school's guidance for working one-to-one with pupils, although they can identify some appropriate measures.

The single central record is not accurately completed. There is a lack of understanding of the necessary checks, their meaning and purpose. This has led to errors. There have been no staff appointments to the school under the tenure of the current headteacher. However, records show that recruitment processes have lacked rigour in terms of probing issues around safeguarding.

### **External support**

The local authority's support and challenge of the school's safeguarding arrangements are ineffective. The local authority has conducted two reviews of the school's safeguarding arrangements over the past two years. However, there has been no effective follow-up to check that things have improved quickly. The work of different local authority officers responsible for reviewing the school's work has not been joined up sufficiently. This means that issues are not followed up or addressed effectively. There is limited evidence that, over time, local authority officers have questioned the headteacher about the school's safeguarding procedures or culture during regular visits to the school.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Develop the role of the designated safeguarding leaders to ensure their work is fully effective.
- Ensure that pupils have regular and carefully planned opportunities to learn about how to keep themselves safe.

- Ensure that all members of staff have high-quality training that helps them identify all of the potential risks to pupils.
- Ensure that those responsible for completing and recording the necessary pre-employment checks are properly trained and that the single central record is accurately maintained.
- Review the recruitment processes of the school to ensure that they are rigorous in probing questions around safeguarding.
- Ensure that governors have the training and support they need to fulfil their role in ensuring that safeguarding is effective.

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

Michelle Winter  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

The letter should also be copied to the following:

- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the local authority - where appropriate
- The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) if the school has a sixth form  
[hns.efa@education.gov.uk](mailto:hns.efa@education.gov.uk)
- The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) if the school is a non-maintained special school  
[\[hns.efa@education.gov.uk\]](mailto:hns.efa@education.gov.uk)
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- For academies [[School.NOTIFICATIONS@education.gov.uk](mailto:School.NOTIFICATIONS@education.gov.uk)]
- For free schools, UTCs and studio schools [[School.NOTIFICATIONS@education.gov.uk](mailto:School.NOTIFICATIONS@education.gov.uk)]
- Department for Education [if the school is a non-maintained special school]  
[\[registration.enquiries@education.gov.uk\]](mailto:registration.enquiries@education.gov.uk)