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Deborah Hulls
Acting Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Hulls

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Rushwick Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 19 July 2022, 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 February 2022. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the second routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. I discussed the ongoing impact of the pandemic with you, and have taken that into account in my evaluation of the school.

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

The school continues to be inadequate. Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

The school's action plans are fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Worcester, the regional schools commissioner and the director of

children's services for Worcestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Helen Forrest
Her Majesty's Inspector

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 19 July 2022

Context

Since the section 5 inspection in February 2022, there has been a change in leadership at the school. The deputy headteacher has been the acting headteacher since the day after the inspection. She has taken on the role of designated safeguarding lead and retained her role as the special educational needs coordinator. Until recently, she also retained the responsibilities she had as deputy headteacher.

In the last half term, there has been an acting deputy headteacher for three days a week seconded from another school. There is currently one class teacher on long-term absence. The class is being covered by staff from the school.

The progress made towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation

Leaders have taken swift and effective action since the previous inspection to address the areas for improvement identified in the previous section 5 inspection report.

Leaders addressed the weaknesses identified in safeguarding with urgency. Changes to the system for identifying and reporting safeguarding risks happened immediately. All staff were briefed on the changes. Consequently, they know and understand how to report any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead or one of the deputy designated safeguarding leads. Leaders make it their top priority to respond to any concerns. The up-to-date records show that leaders take appropriate action in a timely way when any issues arise. This includes sharing information with external agencies when necessary. Leaders, including governors and the local authority, have made regular checks on the effectiveness of the actions to safeguard pupils.

Leaders have also changed their procedures for recording accidents and injuries. Appropriate records are kept, and parents and carers are informed promptly if an accident such as a bumped head occurs. The school's single central record demonstrates that leaders make the appropriate checks on all adults who work on the school site.

Leaders and staff have increased their expectations of what pupils can achieve. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are expected to learn to read from the time they start school. Leaders have re-established consistent expectations for how early reading is taught. They have clarified how the daily phonics lessons should be delivered and what additional support should look like for those pupils who are finding it hard to keep up with the programme. Leaders have provided appropriate professional development for staff to meet these expectations. They have also made checks on provision to ensure both quality and consistency. Where issues have been identified, additional support has been provided to staff to ensure that they have the subject knowledge they need to teach early reading and phonics effectively.

As a result of these actions, younger pupils can use their phonics knowledge to read unfamiliar words, such as 'sycamore', with accuracy and confidence.

Leaders have taken action to develop consistency in how the mathematics curriculum is implemented across the school. Staff completed training soon after the previous inspection. This has enabled all staff to adopt the same approach to teaching mathematics. There is now a consistent lesson structure in place and leaders' checks on the mathematics curriculum show that staff are more confident with the new approach.

In early years, children make a good start in developing a secure understanding of numbers. Staff ensure that they use a range of strategies to help children subitise and to understand concepts such as 'odd' and 'even' securely. There remain inconsistencies, however, in how staff deliver the different parts of the lesson. Not all staff have a secure subject knowledge, and require further training to ensure that they know how to teach mathematics well. As a result, pupils' knowledge of what they are learning is not secure. Many pupils know what to do, as teaching focuses on procedures, but they do not understand the mathematical concepts they are learning. This does not help them to develop a secure understanding of mathematics. Leaders' checks on the delivery of the curriculum have primarily focused on ensuring that the new approach is being used. They now need to place a greater emphasis on the impact of the curriculum on pupils' knowledge and understanding.

Governors have worked closely with leaders to ensure that the right actions are being taken at the right time to improve the school. They make appropriate checks on the information leaders share with them, including on-site visits to see for themselves the actions that have taken place. They have worked closely with both the local authority and the diocese to make sure that staff, including leaders, have the support they need to improve the school. They have also ensured that staff well-being has been supported.

Leaders' improvement action plans target the right priorities. There is an emphasis for the next academic year on improving staff subject knowledge in relevant areas. This should ensure that the quality of education continues to improve and that the improved practice in safeguarding is embedded. Leaders' actions and impact so far demonstrate that there is capacity for this improvement to continue.

Additional support

Additional support has been provided to the school from the Diocese of Worcester and from the local authority. The diocese has provided pastoral support for the acting headteacher and support to the governing body in finding a structural solution for the school. A safeguarding officer from the local authority has supported the school to make rapid improvements to its safeguarding procedures. The local authority's school improvement adviser and educational improvement advisers have worked with leaders to focus on phonics, mathematics and special educational needs provision. This support

has helped leaders to focus on improving the quality of education. Leaders and governors have found this support invaluable.

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the acting headteacher, other senior leaders, pupils, staff, representatives of those responsible for governance, representatives of the Diocese of Worcester, and the local authority school improvement adviser.