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Nick Andrews
Principal
Dawley Church of England Primary Academy
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Dear Mr Andrews

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Dawley Church of England Primary Academy

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 6 December 2022, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in March 2022.

During the inspection, Donna O'Toole, Ofsted Inspector (OI), and I discussed with you and other senior leaders, the CEO of the multi-academy trust, other staff, governors and the local authority the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We also carried out visits to lessons, listened to pupils read, spoke to pupils on the playground and in the dinner hall, spoke to parents, had meetings with other staff and looked at a range of documents relating to safeguarding. I have considered all of this in coming to my judgement.

Dawley Church of England Primary Academy remains inadequate and has serious weaknesses. Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the category of concern to be removed.

The progress made towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation

Together, with the governors on the local academy committee and members of the trust, you have taken swift action since the last inspection in starting to address the weaknesses identified. These weaknesses were related to the culture of safeguarding in the school, which was judged to be ineffective.

You have introduced and/or updated a range of policies linked to safeguarding. The low-level concerns policy now in place ensures there would be an appropriate and systematic response to any concerns or allegations about adults. Staff know what they would have to do if they had any concerns about an adult working with pupils. You have also ensured that staff receive a range of safeguarding training to give them the knowledge and understanding they need to recognise any signs that a child might be at risk of harm. This knowledge is updated and built on through bulletins and regular discussions in meetings. All staff know who to report a concern to so that nothing, no matter how minor, is missed. You and your leaders act quickly in response to any concern which might mean a child is at risk of harm. This includes making referrals to external agencies when required.

Governors and the trust now have a much clearer oversight of the school's safeguarding systems. You provide governors and the trust with appropriately detailed safeguarding information through regularly scheduled meetings and reports. Governors and the trust make regular checks on this information through a range of activities on site. You have also been supported by another headteacher from within the trust. This balance of support and challenge is helping you to ensure that the culture of safeguarding in the school is improving.

Most of the systems and processes now in place are understood and are used appropriately. However, while all staff know they must report any concern, there are still some variations in how concerns are recorded. At the time of checking, not all written records were on the system the school uses for tracking concerns. This did not put any pupils at risk of harm but was not in line with the school's policy.

During this visit, wider aspects of safeguarding, such as the management of medicines and the supervision of pupils, were explored. You have ensured there are some effective systems in place for the administration of medicines and for the use of inhalers. Staff have had appropriate training for these and maintain accurate records. However, the process for completing and reviewing health care plans is not as rigorous. On the day of the visit, the level of supervision for some of the younger children meant that they were not always in sight of the adult responsible for supervising them. This puts children at a potential risk of harm.

There is more work to be done to embed the culture of safeguarding in the school so that safeguarding is effective.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local academy committee, the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the St Chad's multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Lichfield, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Telford and Wrekin. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Helen Forrest
His Majesty's Inspector