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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
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29 June 2023

Mrs Jo Mould  
Headteacher  
Sherburn Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School  
St Hilda's Street  
Sherburn  
Malton  
North Yorkshire  
YO17 8PG

Dear Mrs Mould

### **Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Sherburn Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on Tuesday 6 June 2023, 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 second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in June 2022.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and other senior leaders, members of the interim executive board of governors, a representative from the Diocese of York and the local authority, 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. I also visited lessons, spoke to pupils, met with a selection of teaching and non-teaching staff and met with the senior leaders responsible for safeguarding in school. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

**Sherburn Church of England Primary School 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**

Since the previous monitoring visit, the interim executive board (IEB) members have had the opportunity to meet on a frequent basis. You and the IEB have rightly focused on

continuing to develop and embed a culture of safeguarding at the school. You have ensured that staff have regular and targeted training and updates in relation to safeguarding. You are making checks on how well this information has been understood by staff. You are beginning to ensure that personal, health social and economic (PSHE) education is taught weekly to ensure that pupils have the knowledge they need to keep themselves as safe as possible in relation to issues such as online safety, consent and healthy relationships.

You are ensuring that staff are aware of their contribution to the culture of safeguarding within the school. You provide the IEB with frequent updates about the safeguarding picture in the school. There is further work to do so that there are clear systems for identifying trends and patterns in safeguarding incidents and that these are shared with the IEB. This will ensure that challenge and discussion can take place around further actions that leaders need to take to respond to one-off or repeated incidents. Staff report concerns swiftly, and leaders respond to these promptly and effectively to ensure that pupils and families get the support they need.

You have prioritised online safety within the PSHE curriculum in response to some more recent incidents, and based on feedback from staff. This is beginning to have an impact. You are actively considering the PSHE and relationships and sex education content and knowledge that you need to prioritise for pupils, especially pupils in Year 6, before the end of the academic year.

Safeguarding is effective, and the culture of safeguarding in the school is still developing. Together with leaders you do all that you can to ensure that pupils are safe. Leaders ensure that staff at all levels receive the information and updates necessary so that they are fully aware of their roles and their contact points for any concerns. They receive training about the most recent updates to Keeping Children Safe in Education. A more strategic training plan for staff is required to ensure that the oversight of safeguarding training from senior leaders is clear and comprehensive. You are aware that systems for checking that some members of support and ancillary staff are fully aware of local risks and the content of safeguarding updates need to be further refined and sharpened.

You have recently taken action to develop the quality of education on offer to pupils. You rightly prioritised a small number of subjects to develop, based on the capacity available in school. The work you have undertaken in these subjects has translated into more positive and meaningful experiences for pupils in their learning in foundation subjects. Pupils and staff speak positively about the impact of this. This work is at a very early stage and you are aware of the need to accelerate the work being done so that a more clearly defined curriculum and pedagogical approach is in place as soon as possible. Pupils at the earliest stages of reading can read unfamiliar books and there is an emerging sense of a consistent pedagogy around phonics. You are aware of the importance of ensuring that all staff receive the most up-to-date training to support them to deliver your chosen phonics programme with fidelity.

There is further work to do on supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and ensuring that their phonics offer gives them the best possible start. You are aware that further training and support are required for staff to improve their understanding of how to support pupils with SEND through effective pedagogical strategies.

The IEB offers both challenge and support. Members of the IEB bring to bear their experience and expertise through their skilful questioning. Staff feel connected to the school's improvement journey. They have a clear sense of how and where the school is continuing to improve. For example, they talk enthusiastically about the recent development of some foundation subjects and the more consistent understanding and application of the school's behaviour policy. This consistent application of the policy is reflected in classes, where pupils show positive learning behaviours.

Leaders have sought input from several external agencies to help them improve the school. Planned future work with the mathematics and English hubs will be important to ensure that within core subjects there is a consistency of pedagogy and opportunities to further develop subject leaders to add long-term capacity to the school.

Safeguarding audits and other checks and visits from the local authority have supported the safeguarding arrangements in school and highlighted where further work needs to be undertaken. The most recent statement of action has rightly amended timelines to recognise the scale and challenge of the work that needs to be undertaken to continue to move the school in the right direction. Leaders have an accurate picture of the school and the significant challenges and weaknesses it still has.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the interim executive board, the director of education for the Diocese of York, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for North Yorkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Liam Colclough  
**His Majesty's Inspector**