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Jane Winterbone
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Dear Darren

27 May 2022

I am writing to you to formally record the progress you are making following your serious weaknesses Ofsted judgement on 6-7 October 2021. In their report, published on 16 November 2021, Ofsted identified the following areas:

- The school's procedures for sharing information about safeguarding are not fit for purpose. Information about pupils' welfare and communications with other professionals have not been noted accurately or in enough detail. The school's child protection files are disorganised and some information is missing. Leaders and governors must urgently review and improve arrangements for noting, reporting, referring, storing and sharing information about pupils' welfare and safety.
- Staff do not all understand their safeguarding duties, including the importance of noting and passing on concerns. Leaders must ensure that all staff fully understand their statutory responsibilities and that they deepen their understanding of potential risk of harm to pupils.
- Until recently, the teaching of reading has not been the top priority in the school. The use of different phonics programmes leads to inconsistent approaches and staff have not had enough training to teach early reading effectively. Leaders must ensure that staff are trained in an appropriate phonics programme and that books for pupils' own practice are actually matched to the sounds they are learning.
- Pupils' reading diet in English lessons is constrained by the limitations of the topic-led curriculum. Pupils do not have enough rich experiences of high-quality literature. Leaders and teachers need to ensure that the overall programme for reading, including in the early years, is determined by more demanding fiction and non-fiction texts.
- The curriculum for science and the foundation subjects is not ambitious and does not include enough subject-specific content. In the early years and key stage 1, topics chosen for pupils to study do not prioritise the knowledge pupils need to progress to the next stage of their education. Leaders need to make sure that curriculum planning is based on an ambitious selection of specific subject content pupils need to learn.
- Staff and leaders have not done enough to promote pupils' personal development. The school does not place enough emphasis on promoting pupils' understanding of British values and the wider world beyond the school. Leaders

should ensure that pupils understand the school's values and that they have more opportunities to develop spiritually and culturally.

- Governors knew that aspects of the school needed to improve but had not identified the real scale of the weaknesses, including the safeguarding failings. Governors must ensure that they get to know more about the curriculum and the school's safeguarding procedures and that they increase the level of challenge in their questions for senior leaders.

Following a meeting with my Service Manager for Education Effectiveness and the Team Manager for Education Safeguarding and after reviewing your updated action plan, I would like to start by acknowledging your dedication and the drive to ensure the issues identified above are addressed rapidly and robustly. The safeguarding action plan alone spans 20 pages with specific and targeted actions across the areas outlined above and it is impressive that the vast majority have either been actioned or are in the process of being actioned.

I would like to take this opportunity to delve further and acknowledge the specific areas of your work.

Through your meetings with the Team Manager for Education Safeguarding, you have made it clear that you were leading a change in the culture at Busbridge Infant School, ensuring that all children are safeguarded and that safeguarding is at the forefront of every staff member's mind and embedded in the lifeblood of the school. It was reassuring to learn that you have taken a staged approach to this work. You have reviewed your policies and practices for existing staff, staff have received training and now you are measuring your work to ensure staff are following the new procedures and routines. You are confident that there is now absolute clarity and all staff know and can explain the actions to take should they have a safeguarding concern. Building on this, you have ensured induction for new starters has been adapted so that your high expectations of safeguarding and child protection are imprinted upon new starts as soon as they come through your door. Measuring impact of culture change can take time, however that has not stopped you and your drive for change. You are working with your governors, conducting learning walks to test and collect evidence of implementation and embedding of change. Finally, it is important to note that embedding change comes at a cost. School budgets are tighter now more than ever and the fact you have allocated dedicated leadership time to support safeguarding work shows your commitment to establishing an effective and mature safeguarding culture at Busbridge Infant School.

As part of changes that you are leading and implementing, it is evident that you want a highly trained and skilled workforce working with and supporting the children and families in your community. The level of training that you have and are committed to is refreshing and I hope it is changing practice at the school. It is hard to ascertain from your action plan the impact of the training, however I am sure this will be evident in the learning walks you conduct with SFET and your governors. Your staff are very fortunate to work under the leadership of someone who values and can see the importance of continual professional development.

As an Assistant Director for Education, knowing that a school has issues with safeguarding compliance is of course worrying. Although compliance work should be our bread and butter, too often it is not. Therefore, I am glad that you tackled this head on and ensured this vital work was carried out as without it, all other improvements would have been undermined. Work on ensuring child protection and safeguarding files are high quality, reviewing existing cases to make sure action and

support plans were appropriate and making a difference as well as securing advice and reviewing all policies and procedures have been key activities to undertake. If completed in the thorough and robust manner and reflected upon with the honesty you have shown throughout this process, these changes will underpin the cultural change to need to achieve and realise.

Finally, it is important to note, that while you did receive comments related to your curriculum, the quality of education and personal development were judged to be requires improvement by Ofsted in October 2021. SAfE have kept me abreast of the work you have completed with your improvement partner and now your academy sponsor. I am sure you will agree, the local authority is very fortunate to have SFET within our community as it is clear from their work supporting our schools that they live and breathe their published aim of playing their part in raising national standards in education through sharing good practice with other school and teachers across the country. My sincerest thanks go to all the leaders at SFET as again they have been a key partner in working and supporting developments in our community for the benefit of children and families in Surrey.

All of the actions identified above are exceptionally positive, however as we both know, it is the effective embedding of new practice that ensures positive change is sustained and impacts upon the children's outcomes. Therefore, at your next meeting, it will be good to hear more about the impact these changes are having on the children attending your school.

I would like to close this letter by thanking you for all the hard work and dedication from you and your team. You continue to lead your school forward with courage and dignity and whilst the Ofsted outcome must have been difficult for you, you have focused on the children and led from the front.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Jane Winterbone'.

Jane Winterbone
Assistant Director