Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted

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Jim McLucas
Interim Headteacher
Chingford Hall Primary School
4 Burnside Avenue
Chingford
London
E4 8YJ

Dear Mr McLucas

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Chingford Hall Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 6 December 2018 with James Robinson, Ofsted Inspector, 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 April 2018. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out to review the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements because these were judged as ineffective during the April 2018 section 5 inspection.

Evidence

During this inspection, we met with you and the interim chief executive officer (CEO) to discuss actions taken since the previous inspection and plans for future school improvement. We looked at provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and met with your special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) to consider how well you meet these pupils' needs and how you keep them safe. We looked at safeguarding arrangements, including in the early years foundation stage, to check that they are in line with statutory requirements. We analysed how the school records safeguarding referrals and the checks on the suitability of staff to work at the school. We discussed with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL), and you in your role as deputy DSL, how well

you work with external agencies and the quality of training given to staff. I met with the chair of the governance board, who is also a trustee. We spoke to a number of teachers, staff and pupils to gather their views about safeguarding procedures, the information they receive and where they can seek help and advice. We considered the learning environment to check that it was appropriately safe and secure. We looked at the school's systems for recording concerns, monitoring holiday absence and following up the whereabouts of pupils leaving the school. We considered arrangements for administering medicines and first aid.

Context

There have been a number of significant changes in leadership since the previous inspection. An interim CEO took up post in August 2018 to support all four schools within the Silver Birch Academy Trust, including Chingford Hall Primary. Three new trustees, appointed by the Department for Education, now oversee the trust. Together, the CEO and the trustees, with the support of the regional schools commissioner, have brokered the support of a new multi-academy trust, which is due to assume responsibility for the school in the spring. The CEO has appointed an interim headteacher, who started in October 2018, to oversee the transition to the new trust and provide continuity for pupils, staff, parents and carers until August 2019. The legacy leadership team has been restructured. There are two assistant headteachers, one who now leads on teaching and learning and the other on safeguarding and responsibility for SEND as the SENCo.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

You, the CEO and the trustees have a highly accurate understanding of the urgent actions needed to secure improvements across the school. You inherited a substantial financial deficit, staff turbulence and inadequate standards. In a short space of time, you have already had a significant impact on the quality of education provided.

You and the CEO have rightly prioritised ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils and staff. Following the inspection in April 2018, both the local authority and external consultants were commissioned to undertake safeguarding reviews of the provision. You have ensured that recommendations from both reviews have been acted upon and continually check that safeguarding arrangements are now of the highest quality.

You and the CEO have reviewed the way checks on the suitability of staff to work at the school are undertaken and recorded. The single central record is now comprehensive and in line with statutory guidelines. You quickly identified that procedures at the start and end of the school day were potentially putting some pupils at risk. You have therefore changed the timings of the school day so that pupils all leave together at 3.30 pm. This ensures that pupils' whereabouts are known and that registration arrangements are accurate. You have ensured that one

of your school leaders is the DSL, has had the necessary training to undertake the role competently, and has the time to do so effectively.

You and the CEO have ensured that staff at all levels are trained sufficiently in identifying signs of concern, abuse and neglect. Staff are now very aware of the potential risks in the wider community, including knife crime, female genital mutilation and the risk of radicalisation. They are vigilant about passing on concerns in a timely and efficient way and understand their statutory responsibility to keep pupils safe. Staff have received further training on the electronic referral system, introduced by your predecessor, and are confident about the protocols for sharing information. You know that regular changes in staffing mean that safeguarding training needs to be ongoing, so that procedures can be followed consistently. You have revised the safeguarding policy and produced a detailed safeguarding manual to support both new and existing staff. All staff spoken to during the inspection were clear about their responsibility to pass on concerns in a timely and efficient way, the protocols to follow and relevant senior leaders to inform.

Systems for checking pupils' whereabouts, either due to term-time absence or for those leaving the school, are comprehensive and effective. The administrative team understand their statutory responsibilities to inform you and your DSL of any pupil's absence that is causing concern, so that timely actions can be implemented to mitigate any potential risks.

You have reviewed record-keeping, safeguarding arrangements and the administration of medication in the early years, to ensure that they meet statutory requirements. You are currently focusing on improving the early years foundation stage curriculum to ensure that it enables children to become competent in all seven areas of learning. In particular, you are ensuring that children have regular opportunities to explore and learn in the ample outdoor facilities.

The large site is well maintained, safe and secure. Breaktimes are well supervised and pupils were clear about which adults they could turn to, should they have a concern. Relationships between pupils and adults are highly positive. Pupils explained that they mix well together, support younger pupils and show respect and tolerance towards each other's backgrounds, faiths and beliefs. Bullying is rare. Pupils talked about how they stay safe walking home from school and when online. The vast majority of pupils enjoy coming to school and attend regularly. You are working to convince a minority of families of the importance of their children attending school regularly.

You and the CEO quickly identified that, until very recently, the provision for pupils with SEND was inadequate. A number of pupils on the SEND register still await accurate and professional assessments of their special educational needs. Following a local authority review of the provision in June 2018, you have ensured that your SENCo has the physical resources to provide support for all these pupils. However, this is an area that still needs urgent development to ensure that assessments are

accurate and staff are well trained to meet individual pupils' needs so that they are supported in their learning and kept safe at all times.

External support

The Boleyn Trust have provided ongoing guidance for the school since August 2018 through their CEO acting as an interim CEO for the trust, the appointment of a Boleyn headteacher as interim headteacher and the support of three specialist leaders of education (SLEs).

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils with SEND are assessed accurately, so that additional funding can be used effectively to meet their needs in order that they learn well and are kept safe.

Following the inspection, the following judgements were made:

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

The school's statement of action is fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for the London Borough of Waltham Forest. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Helen Matthews
Her Majesty's Inspector