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Kate Redman  
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Dear Ms Redman

## **Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of The Weald CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 1 May 2019, 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 October 2018. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with you, the head of school, a group of staff, the chair of the interim academy board (IAB) and a representative of the trust. The trust's statement of action and the school's improvement plans were evaluated.

I observed learning in parts of lessons with the head of school. I looked at pupils' books and spoke to pupils about their learning. I also met with parents at the start of the school day. I considered the school's own information on pupils' progress and attainment, records relating to safeguarding and trust officers' notes of visits. The single central record was checked.

### **Context**

Since the last inspection, you have been resolute in setting higher standards for staff and in successfully recruiting new staff. You have recruited two new assistant

headteachers, a new early years teacher and a new Year 4 teacher. You have also appointed a new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) from September 2019. The head of school is currently the SENCo and has been working with the SENCo from another primary school in the trust, Surrey Hills Church of England Primary School. The trust's director of education spends one day each week in school.

### **The quality of leadership and management at the school**

You have wasted no time in implementing a range of measures and strategies aimed at improving standards across the school. For example, you have introduced a new assessment system so that leaders have a more accurate understanding of how much progress pupils are making. Leaders and teachers work with colleagues in the trust's other schools to moderate the work of pupils. Consequently, the accuracy of teachers' assessment is improving. Furthermore, you have ensured that leaders' monitoring activities have provided a clearer picture of current standards within the school. For example, you have introduced lesson observations, reviews of pupils' work and coaching meetings with teachers.

Leaders have not shied away from setting higher standards for teachers. Consequently, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving. Where teaching is stronger, for example in Year 6, teachers plan well for the needs of all pupils and provide thought-provoking activities. Improvements in teaching are evident in pupils' books. For example, 'steps to success' feedback sheets help pupils to understand what they need to do to improve. Nevertheless, there are still inconsistencies in the level of challenge across year groups. In some year groups, pupils do not yet make enough progress because they have significant gaps in their knowledge due to a legacy of weaker teaching in the past. However, leaders' strategies to improve teachers' planning, improve behaviour and attendance, and support teachers through strong line management and coaching, are beginning to have a positive effect.

The school's improvement plans address the areas for improvement from the school's last inspection report. It has enabled you, IAB members and the trust to hold staff to account and direct school resources and support to the right places. You regularly review plans for improvement and rate your progress for each action. This means that you, members of the IAB and the trust know which improvement strategies are working and which require further focus. The school improvement plans would benefit from further refinement to the way that the impact of improvement strategies is measured. This would include measuring improvements against all pupils' progress, the progress of disadvantaged pupils and that of the most able pupils.

Together with the head of school, you have revised the roles and responsibilities of staff and ensured that staff have a clearer understanding of their roles. Improved line management systems are having an impact on the effectiveness of leaders.

Regular meetings with members of staff mean that staff are held to account more effectively.

Leaders have set high standards for pupils' behaviour and introduced a simplified behaviour policy. As a result, pupils' behaviour is improving. Pupils that I spoke to told me that leaders' changes in the behaviour policy have led to better behaviour in lessons. They appreciate that social times have been changed so that different year groups take turns to use play equipment. This, together with better staff supervision, has led to a more harmonious atmosphere and fewer behaviour incidents during social times.

Together with the head of school, you have worked hard to improve attendance. A key focus of your approach has been more frequent communication with parents. You have also introduced positive incentives to promote regular attendance. Consequently, attendance is improving compared to last year and the number of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, who are persistently absent is declining sharply.

Parents recognise that leadership and management has improved since the last inspection. Parents that I spoke to commented on the regular newsletters that keep them informed about school issues and standards. Meetings between parents, school leaders and trust representatives have been well received by parents. Some parents appreciate having the opportunity to discuss their concerns with leaders and trust members. For example, parents told me that in the 'parents' forum' they have been able to make suggestions regarding school improvements and have been listened to by leaders.

The IAB provides increasingly effective challenge and support to leaders. IAB members probe leaders' assertions about the effectiveness of school improvements and visit school to speak to staff and offer support. There is a broad range of expertise among IAB members. The chair of the IAB is currently a national leader in governance and among other members are currently serving headteachers in other schools.

You rightly recognise that provision for disadvantaged pupils in the past has not been strong enough. A review of the use of pupil premium funding, carried out in March 2019, identified a series of recommendations. You and the head of school are committed to implementing these recommendations and have put plans in place to appoint a dedicated leader of pupil premium in September 2019. Although in its early stages, work to improve the use of pupil premium funding is more closely monitored. Trust members lead regular meetings to discuss the progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils' progress in general.

Staff are very positive about the changes in school since the last inspection. They recognise that there is a more consistent approach to applying school policies and improved teaching strategies. Staff that I spoke to told me that leaders are

considerate of staff well-being and workload. Leaders have implemented improved policies whilst keeping staff well-being at the forefront of their minds. Staff value the approachability of leaders. Staff also value the training opportunities that are open to them.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

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

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

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

I am copying this letter to the chair of the IAB and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Guildford, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Surrey. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Harry Ingham  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**