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29 November 2017

Lando Du Plooy  
Interim Headteacher  
Dersingham Primary School  
Dersingham Avenue  
London  
E12 5QJ

Dear Mr Du Plooy

### **No formal designation inspection of Dersingham Primary School**

Following my visit with John Kennedy, Her Majesty's Inspector and Sean Flood, Ofsted Inspector to your school on 21 November 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector wished to determine the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements at the school.

### **Evidence**

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. They met with you, senior leaders and groups of teachers and support staff. Inspectors also met with members of the interim executive board (IEB) and the executive headteacher. They held telephone conversations with an independent consultant and with a local authority officer. Inspectors looked at written records of IEB meetings and records of IEB members' visits to the school. They also scrutinised information about pupils' attendance. Inspectors toured the school site. They observed outdoor playtimes and an assembly. Inspectors met formally with two groups of pupils and spoke informally to pupils, parents and carers.

Having considered the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Safeguarding is effective.

## Context

Dersingham Primary School has 640 pupils on roll aged from three to 11 years old. Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average. Around a third of pupils are disadvantaged, a higher proportion than average.

Following your appointment as interim headteacher in April 2017, you have made significant changes to raise the profile of safeguarding and improve safety at the school. You have successfully ensured that staff, parents and pupils understand and welcome the changes and recognise their individual responsibilities in securing the safeguarding of pupils in your care. You have taken on the role of designated safeguarding lead while these important changes are being established. Parents and pupils told inspectors that you are approachable and highly visible around the school.

All members of the staff team have received recent training in aspects of safeguarding. They recognise that, before the training, their knowledge was out of date. They are now equipped to deal with any concerns that may arise. Staff know what issues the school expects them to report, and who they should report them to. They are equally well informed about how to report allegations made against staff. Senior staff have received advanced safeguarding training and can take on specific safeguarding responsibilities if you are absent. Where leaders have concerns about a pupil, prompt referrals are made to other agencies, such as the local authority.

Pupils, supported by the clear information on posters around school, know who they can speak to if they are worried. They welcome the use of postboxes in each area of the school where they can post notes or drawings of their concerns. These postboxes are checked daily by learning mentors who follow up any concerns swiftly.

You have introduced changes to make the school a safer place and have successfully communicated these to the pupils. Pupils are developing an understanding of risks and the reasons why changes are made to protect them from harm. Soon after arriving at the school, you identified some risks that the site presented and quickly made changes to address these. The rooftop garden is no longer in use. Pupils understand the reasons behind this. They explained clearly to inspectors why they are not able to use this play area until work to secure its safety is completed. Pupils were also able to describe clearly the system you have implemented to keep them safe at the end of the day when parents enter the site to collect their children.

Pupils play safely in the playgrounds because they can participate in a range of structured activities. Staff on duty are highly visible and well trained. They carry first aid bags so that minor bumps and bruises can be dealt with quickly and easily. Staff

are aware of pupils who have medical needs and take good care of them.

Leaders and managers follow up any pupil absence. They work closely with the local authority. An effective system of early intervention and home visits is reducing the high levels of persistent absence. School staff know pupils and their families well. Professional relationships between pupils and members of staff are strong and support a culture of openness and transparency.

Leaders have made sure that all required checks on the suitability of staff to work with children are completed and recorded. The single central record is monitored regularly by members of the IEB to ensure that it remains up to date.

This term, leaders have improved the way that staff encourage pupils to behave sensibly. Pupils appreciate the new rewards and sanctions. Pupils understand the rules. They are proud of their school. Pupils say that any bullying is dealt with well. They described your leadership as 'strict but fair'. Leaders invite external organisations, including children's safeguarding charities such as the NSPCC, to talk to pupils about the risks that they may face in the local community and develop pupils' resilience to these.

Parents who spoke to inspectors were very positive about the recent changes that you have introduced. They said that these have had a significant and positive impact on the safety and well-being of their children.

Members of the IEB visit the school often. While these visits may be focused on specific elements of school life, members consider aspects of safeguarding during every visit. Records of visits and of IEB meetings show that members of the IEB hold leaders to account sharply over safeguarding matters.

As interim headteacher, you have taken on much of the responsibility for securing the effectiveness of safeguarding. Members of the IEB recognise that this is not sustainable in the long term because you also have responsibility for the overall leadership of the school.

### **External support**

Local authority officers have made several visits to the school and focused on safeguarding matters. The IEB commissioned an external consultant to complete a safeguarding review. Members of the IEB are committed to sustaining a strong safeguarding culture. To increase the strength of the school's leadership, the IEB has established close links with another local school. Very recently, the headteacher of the local school has taken on the role of executive headteacher at Dersingham.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- improvements are sustained by reducing the current over-reliance on the interim headteacher to fulfil key duties
- recently introduced safeguarding and behaviour systems and procedures are strongly maintained.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the interim executive board, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Newham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Gaynor Roberts  
**Senior Her Majesty's Inspector**