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Bhavin Tailor
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Tailor

Urgent inspection of The Brakenhale School

Following my visit with Yvonne Garvey, Eliot Hodges, Stuart Edwards and Tom Neave, Ofsted Inspectors, to your school on 13 September 2022, I write on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and the time you took to discuss your school.

This inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for urgent inspections. The inspection was carried out because His Majesty's Chief Inspector wished to determine the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements at the school, as concerns had been raised with Ofsted about aspects of the effectiveness of leadership and management in the school (including governance), and the behaviour and attitudes of pupils.

We do not give graded judgements on urgent inspections. However, if we find some evidence that overall standards may be declining, but where no serious concerns have been identified, then the next inspection will normally be a graded inspection, which will be carried out under section 5 of the Act and be brought forward. If we have serious concerns, we will deem the urgent inspection as a graded inspection immediately.

Evidence

We scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements, and met with the headteacher, other leaders, groups of pupils, groups of teachers, and representatives of Greenshaw Learning Trust, including the chief executive officer. We scrutinised a range of documentary evidence, including minutes of governors' and trustees' meetings, a number of policies, information about

pupils' attendance and behaviour, and curriculum plans for personal, social and health education. We visited lessons and observed pupils' behaviour around the school.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

Main Findings

Pupils' very positive conduct creates a calm and orderly atmosphere across the school, both in lessons and beyond. They rise to leaders' high expectations. Teachers and other staff implement agreed procedures and approaches to managing pupils' behaviour consistently well. The vast majority of pupils attend regularly and value the education they receive. They recognise that leaders have established a culture which prioritises equality and respect. Pupils socialise well together during breaktimes and lunchtimes. They genuinely value the rewards they receive for good effort and behaviour. Any sanctions are used appropriately and rates of suspension are low. Very few pupils are permanently excluded. Leaders and staff support pupils who have specific difficulties with managing their behaviour effectively.

Pupils are happy and safe at school. They know who to turn to get support for any problems they might have, trusting staff to provide the right help. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including online, and about how to develop and sustain healthy relationships. Leaders ensure that strong processes are in place to safeguard pupils' welfare, including making all of the right checks on staff. Leaders provide regular, effective training, which means staff are well informed about how to identify any potential issues and know what action to take. This includes important areas such as sexual violence and harassment.

When referrals are made, leaders are swift to seek and implement the right support for pupils, including working with external agencies. Leaders acknowledge that, while they keep records of concerns, actions and outcomes, this information is not always kept together in one place or as readily accessible as it might be. However, although systems for record-keeping could be tighter, this does not place pupils at risk of harm. Leaders deal with any allegations about members of staff appropriately.

Leaders work very effectively to support the learning and personal development of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff are well trained and knowledgeable. Identification processes are accurate. Leaders involve parents well and develop strong partnerships, especially in relation to pupils with education, health and care plans. Leaders review provision for pupils regularly to see how well it is working and make any necessary changes. There is good liaison with primary feeder schools to make sure pupils' transition to Year 7 is as smooth as possible. A very small number of pupils with SEND attend alternative provision, and leaders monitor whether this is meeting pupils' needs. However, for some other pupils who attend alternative provision, leaders'

checks are not as sharply focused on ensuring placements continue to be as beneficial and effective as possible.

Leaders manage the process of pupils who leave and join the school at times other than at the start and end of the school year well. Although the numbers of pupils leaving the school roll are not high, leaders maintain a clear understanding of the legitimate reasons why pupils leave and track their destinations. Leaders also manage any complaints they receive effectively and respond appropriately, following the school's policy. Leaders rightly analyse any themes arising from complaints and make subsequent changes. For example, leaders have extended lunchtime and created more covered outdoor areas in response to some parents' concerns.

Governors and trustees have robust systems in place to make sure they maintain an up-to-date and accurate oversight of key areas such as safeguarding, provision for pupils with SEND, pupils' attendance and the use of suspensions. For example, safeguarding is monitored closely by the governing body and discussed regularly by trustees. In common with other schools in the Greenshaw Learning Trust, the trust conducts an annual audit of safeguarding at the school. This has helped those responsible for governance to identify that safeguarding records could be, at times, organised more effectively. Trust officers visit the school regularly to evaluate the school's work and to provide any professional support.

Priorities for further improvement

- While leaders identify safeguarding concerns, take swift action and provide effective help for pupils, safeguarding records could be tightened up further so that important information is in one place and readily accessible.
- Leaders' evaluation and monitoring of the effectiveness of some pupils' placements in alternative provision are not as sharp as they could be. Leaders should take steps to ensure that alternative provision is fully effective at meeting the needs of all pupils who attend.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of Greenshaw Learning Trust multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bracknell Forest. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Haynes
His Majesty's Inspector