

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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26 June 2017

Geoff Renwick  
Headteacher  
William Brookes School  
Farley Road  
Much Wenlock  
Shropshire  
TF13 6NB

Dear Mr Renwick

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of William Brookes School**

Following my visit with Graeme Rudland, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 13 to 14 June 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the 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 recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in February 2017.

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

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

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

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that the school may appoint newly qualified teachers.

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

Yours sincerely

Alun Williams  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in February 2017.**

- As a matter of urgency, improve safeguarding by ensuring that:
  - all staff, including non-teachers, understand that they have an important role in promoting the safeguarding of pupils
  - staff closely follow all policies and procedures for safeguarding
  - leaders responsible for safeguarding have a full overview of all elements of safeguarding in the school
  - leaders keep records of safeguarding concerns and cases in a secure, well organised, accurate and detailed way
  - all staff understand the systems for reporting concerns and that these systems enable effective communication to take place between staff, leaders, pupils, families and outside agencies
  - leaders review records of safeguarding training so that they can be sure that all staff are appropriately trained
  - leaders address immediately any gaps in staff training or knowledge that exist
  - students in the sixth form gain a stronger knowledge of the range of risks they face.
- Improve attendance and the monitoring of attendance, by:
  - regularly checking on the attendance of groups of pupils so that leaders identify patterns in absence and can address them immediately
  - using up-to-date national comparisons for absence and persistent absence
  - improving the attendance of students in the sixth form.
- Reduce the instances of low-level disruption in lessons, by:
  - ensuring that all teachers use the school's discipline policy consistently
  - identifying where behaviour issues are prevalent in particular subjects or for groups of pupils

An external review of governance, with a specific focus on safeguarding, should be undertaken to establish how this area of leadership and management can be strengthened.

## **Report on the first monitoring inspection on 13 and 14 June 2017**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. They met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, other staff, four groups of pupils, three governors – including the chair of the board of governors – and a representative from the local authority.

Inspectors observed learning and behaviour during brief visits to lessons. They observed pupils at morning break and lunchtime and as they moved around the school. Inspectors spoke with many pupils about their attitudes to, and opinions about, the school. Several documents were scrutinised, including the school's improvement plan, minutes of governing board meetings and the school's records about pupils' behaviour and attendance.

### **Context**

Following February's inspection, governors commissioned a review of the school's leadership. Its recommendations are currently being implemented, with revised roles and responsibilities for several senior leaders, including changes to the designated safeguarding lead and the special educational needs coordinator. A non-teaching safeguarding officer has been appointed to support the school's designated safeguarding leads. Seven teachers are leaving the school at the end of the academic year. All vacancies have been filled and the school is poised to be fully staffed in September 2017.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Leaders and governors have acted speedily and decisively to address the weaknesses identified during February's inspection. Clear progress is evident in all areas identified as needing to improve. Safeguarding has assumed a far higher profile across the school, attendance is improving and instances of low-level disruption have reduced. Leaders' monitoring of behaviour and attendance has improved.

A culture of safeguarding is rapidly developing across the school. Leaders and governors have revised policies and procedures, which are now clear and concise. Staff understand, and are increasingly using, new systems for reporting concerns about pupils. When they have a concern, staff complete a referral form and pass it on immediately. Forms are carefully logged and staff are sent an email confirming that their referral has been received and is being dealt with. Staff appreciate this feedback and have greater confidence in leaders and systems as a result. Leaders have provided considerable training for staff since February. All staff and

governors have completed online level 2 safeguarding training, which has been followed up with face-to-face training sessions. Teachers have completed online training on the government's 'Prevent' duty and are currently undertaking training about internet safety. All staff and governors have confirmed that they have read and understood the most recent version of 'Keeping children safe in education'.

Leaders now carefully evaluate and follow up training. For example, a survey of staff following the level 2 training revealed remaining uncertainty about female genital mutilation. Leaders issued a brief fact-sheet that served to fill in any gaps in knowledge. Leaders now provide a safeguarding briefing for staff each week. Here, staff discuss scenarios and so deepen their understanding of the issues involved.

Because of much-improved training, staff are now knowledgeable and vigilant about the signs that a pupil may need help.

Child-protection records are now well organised and secure. Leaders have an effective overview of recent referrals and are beginning to be able to spot patterns relating to individual pupils. They are increasingly confident in making referrals to outside agencies and are focusing on making better use of early help to address issues before they escalate and become serious. Procedures for recruiting staff safely are fit for purpose and well used. The school's single central record is complete, compliant and well organised.

The appointment of a non-teaching safeguarding officer has contributed strongly to better organised records and a swifter response to safeguarding concerns.

Implementing the recommendations from the external review of leadership has clarified leaders' roles and responsibilities. It has made clear the lines of responsibility and oversight, particularly in relation to safeguarding. However, revised roles and responsibilities will not be fully in place until September and leaders recognise that staff will need continuing support for new systems to be securely embedded and sustainable in the long term.

Just prior to February's inspection, the board of governors appointed a governor with considerable expertise in safeguarding in an educational setting. This has strengthened the board and improved its ability to scrutinise the school's safeguarding arrangements. Governors have set up a 'well-being and safeguarding committee' that checks safeguarding arrangements and then reports regularly to the full board. Consequently, governors are now more effective in holding leaders to account and in discharging their statutory responsibilities with respect to safeguarding.

Governors have commissioned an external review of governance, as recommended in the inspection report, and this is due to take place imminently. They recognise the need to address any remaining gaps in their knowledge or expertise. For example, governors have not received a report about children looked after.

Governors were unaware of this statutory duty. However, they have checked on provision for children looked after via a link governor.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment was judged to be good in February's inspection. Standards have been maintained in the intervening months.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

Since the inspection, leaders have revised and relaunched the school's behaviour policy. Pupils and staff who spoke with inspectors were unanimously of the view that behaviour in lessons has improved as a result. Pupils are generally well behaved in class and as they move around the school. They are typically courteous and polite. However, some low-level disruption of lessons remains, as does some inconsistency in teachers' use of school procedures.

Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school. They said that bullying is rare and mostly dealt with well by staff. Most pupils have confidence in staff to deal with bullying or any other problem they might have. Pupils were particularly positive about the support they receive from the school's pastoral staff. Members of staff told inspectors that they now have greater confidence in leaders to deal swiftly with incidents of bullying, having expressed some reservations during February's inspection.

Pupils in the main school are taught how to keep themselves safe from a variety of potential dangers through weekly personal, social, health, citizenship and economic (PSHCE) lessons. They are acutely aware of the dangers that can arise, for example when using the internet. They also know how to protect themselves. Pupils told inspectors that they valued recent lessons about sexting that the school had provided.

The PSHCE curriculum in the sixth form is weaker than in the main school. However, since February's inspection, students have received an eight-week intensive module of teaching focusing on risk and staying safe. Leaders have drawn up plans for a comprehensive post-16 PSHCE programme that will be introduced in September.

Leaders now regularly analyse attendance information by pupil group and compare this with national benchmarks. Attendance in the main school remains broadly average. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils, which was low in 2016, has improved considerably this year. Although the attendance of disadvantaged pupils remains lower than for other pupils nationally, the difference has diminished significantly. Actions to improve attendance in the sixth form, including the appointment of a mentor, are beginning to see some impact.

## **Outcomes for pupils**

Outcomes were judged to be good in February's inspection. Standards have been maintained in the intervening months.

## **External support**

The local authority carried out a detailed review of safeguarding shortly after February's inspection. Leaders and governors quickly acted upon all of its recommendations, and this served to improve the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements. A further review is planned before the end of September. Governors commissioned an external review of leadership, which took place soon after the inspection. Implementing its recommendations has helped to clarify roles, responsibilities and oversight of several areas, including safeguarding.