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21 December 2017

Mr Paul Brockwell  
Headteacher  
Graham School  
Woodlands Drive  
Scarborough  
North Yorkshire  
YO12 6QW

Dear Mr Brockwell

### **No formal designation inspection of Graham School**

Following my visit with Patricia Head, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 12 December 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 was concerned about 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 and met with you, other senior leaders, staff, pupils, governors, a representative of the local authority and the executive principal of the Yorkshire Teaching School Alliance (YTSA).

Inspectors also evaluated external reviews, your school's self-evaluation and post-Ofsted action plan, safer recruitment procedures, records of staff training, risk assessments and attendance and behaviour records. Inspectors conducted a review of the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum and how it links to issues of safety and pupils' welfare. Inspectors also took account of the 124 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Together, we conducted visits to a number of classrooms and inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils during lunchtime and break time.

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

Safeguarding is effective

### **Context**

Graham School was inspected in May 2017 and it was judged to require special measures, with safeguarding judged as ineffective. Since the last inspection, the local authority secured your interim appointment as headteacher and facilitated support from the executive principal of the YTSA. Two deputy headteachers, two assistant headteachers and the middle leader responsible for science left the school. Despite difficulties in staff recruitment locally, you appointed a new deputy headteacher and a new assistant headteacher, in June 2017. You restructured the responsibilities of your senior leadership team to incorporate safeguarding into the role of one of the other assistant headteachers. An additional deputy headteacher will join the school in January 2018. The local authority has also very recently appointed a new chair of governors and two additional governors to the governing body. Since the last inspection, you have moved all pupils to be educated on one site. The school is currently awaiting the confirmation of a preferred sponsor to complete the process of converting to an academy.

Following the last inspection in May 2017, the school experienced significant staffing changes and upheaval. Upon your appointment, you and your team conducted a review of the school and correctly identified and prioritised areas for improvement. You took swift actions to address the areas of safeguarding which needed urgent attention. As a result, safeguarding processes and procedures are now more secure and robust. Your focus and determination for continuous improvement have been integral in addressing the decline of the standards of education at the school. You and your team are working tirelessly to ensure there is a much-needed stability across a number of areas of the school and you are beginning to restore the confidence of staff and parents in the school. As a result, staff are more positive about improvements in the school and your leadership. Despite this, some parents continue to have concerns about behaviour and bullying in the school.

Your senior leader responsible for safeguarding has acted swiftly to address the issues identified in the last inspection report. Her focus and expertise have ensured that safeguarding processes were reviewed quickly. She implemented new and more robust systems and clearly communicated these to all staff. All members of staff have now received appropriate safeguarding training and clear guidance on procedures for reporting safeguarding concerns. Staff report that they are more confident in using the newly introduced system for recording safeguarding concerns. They are very clear on what they need to do if they have any concerns. Your designated safeguarding lead and her deputies work effectively together and regularly monitor and review safeguarding cases. They frequently analyse school data and ensure that referrals are timely, external agencies are involved if necessary and support to pupils is provided swiftly. You have ensured the single

central record is compliant, up to date, and regularly checked and monitored. There are now rigorous checking mechanisms in place to ensure the suitability of staff working at the school. You and your team have ensured that recruitment procedures follow safer recruitment guidelines. Any educational trips are risk assessed using a robust system and you and your leaders frequently monitor them.

Since the last inspection, you acted swiftly to address the concerns raised about the safety and welfare of pupils on work placements and reduced timetables. You reviewed the curriculum and currently there are no pupils on work experience. There are now more secure risk assessments in place for work placement providers and any future provision will be done through the local authority service with appropriate checks already in place. You took the decision, rightly, to bring all pupils on reduced timetables back into school. You consulted with parents and set up a provision within the school to support these pupils to reintegrate back to mainstream lessons as soon as possible. As a result, you are now confident that these pupils are safe and attending school. There are currently no pupils on reduced timetables, except those with medical needs. There are a small number of pupils who access alternative provision. You and your leaders have ensured that there is a strong and active partnership with these providers, reinforcing safer practices for the pupils studying off site.

You and your leaders have introduced appropriate strategies to improve the attendance and punctuality of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils. You have strengthened the staffing structure dealing with attendance and have improved the support provided to disadvantaged pupils. You have improved intervention strategies through regular home visits by your educational welfare officer, close collaboration with external agencies and taking legal action, where necessary, to improve attendance of all pupils, including the disadvantaged pupils. As a result, although overall attendance dipped slightly in 2017, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils improved marginally. Punctuality overall has improved significantly since the last inspection. You and your leaders acknowledge that further improvement is needed to bring attendance closer to national averages.

You quickly identified issues with pupils attending lessons on two different sites and acted swiftly to bring all pupils onto one site. You also introduced a revised behaviour policy and raised expectations. Staff have received training on behaviour management. As a result, there has been an increase in the recording of behaviour incidents and exclusions. You have identified pupils who need ongoing support with their behaviour and you have deployed your staff strategically to support these pupils to meet the newly introduced high expectations. Staff and pupils report an improvement in behaviour since the last inspection. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and staff deal quickly and effectively with any bullying incidents when they occur. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is compliant and the atmosphere is calm with very little low-level disruption. In the few lessons where pupils disturb the learning of others, staff follow the school's behaviour policy. You recognise that behaviour during break and lunchtime needs to improve. A small number of pupils show

disrespectful behaviour, use inappropriate language and some staff do not challenge them. The site is secured and there is appropriate adult supervision at the gates at the beginning and end of the school day. You acknowledge that there is more work needed here to ensure that pupils' behaviour improves further and all staff implement the revised behaviour policy consistently.

A review of governance has taken place since the last inspection. A number of governors have stepped down since May 2017. There has been a delay in recruiting suitable governors. The local authority has very recently appointed a new chair of governors, with experience of improving governance. Two additional governors with appropriate skills and expertise have also been very recently recruited to strengthen the governing body further. The chair of governors has a clear vision and appropriate strategies to improve the effectiveness of the challenge and support governors provide to school leaders. Currently, roles and responsibilities for governors are finalised and a safeguarding governor is due to start working with school leaders imminently. Governors acknowledge that they must work with urgency now to address the concerns identified at the last inspection about the effectiveness of governance in holding the school to account with regard to safeguarding arrangements and child protection processes.

### **External support**

The local authority has provided effective support to the school since the last inspection on a number of areas, including safeguarding. The support includes appointments of key leadership staff, deployment of behaviour consultants to provide appropriate training and facilitating collaboration with the local pupil referral service. The local authority also supported the school effectively through the transition of pupils out of alternative provision and back into the mainstream lessons and bringing all pupils onto one site. The local authority school improvement adviser works closely with the school to monitor impact of actions. As a result, the safeguarding procedures and processes of the school have been strengthened. The experienced executive principal of Y TSA provides effective support to you and your leaders through continuous challenge. His knowledge and expertise has been instrumental in bringing about the rapid improvements in safeguarding.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Governors must ensure that they work with urgency to ensure that appropriate challenge and support for school leaders is in place.
- All staff must consistently implement the revised school behaviour policy, communicate the high expectations to all pupils and challenge any inappropriate behaviour.
- Leaders must continue to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence for all pupils, including the disadvantaged.

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

Yours sincerely

Dimitris Spiliotis

**Her Majesty's Inspector**