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18 November 2021

Ben Godber  
Headteacher  
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Wokingham  
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Dear Mr Godber

### **No formal designation inspection of Bohunt School Wokingham**

Following my visit with Alison Robb-Webb, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 3 November 2021, 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 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 no formal designation (NFD) inspections. The inspection was carried out because Her 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 personal development of pupils at the school.

We do not give graded judgements on NFD 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 section 5 inspection and will be brought forward. If we have serious concerns, we will deem the NFD inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

### **Evidence**

We scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. We met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, staff, groups of pupils, the chair of the local governing body, a trustee of the multi-academy trust (MAT) and officials of the MAT, including the chief executive officer (CEO). We spoke

to a sample of parents and alternative providers, and to the designated officer by telephone.

We scrutinised documentation, including the MAT investigation into pupils leaving the school to be educated at home, and curriculum plans for teaching about relationships, sex and health education (RSHE). We also considered attendance records, school surveys, minutes of local governors' meetings and visited a sample of lessons.

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

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

### **Context**

Bohunt School Wokingham is a mixed non-selective school for pupils aged 11 to 16. There are approximately 1200 pupils on role, including a slightly larger proportion from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities than seen on average nationally. The school is part of Bohunt Education Trust (BET) MAT.

### **Main Findings**

Leaders have established a culture of safeguarding at the school. Staff have a secure understanding of their duties and know what to look out for. They know the systems to report worries about pupils and use these well. Induction and training for all staff is comprehensive.

Actions following the reporting of concerns are taken in a timely fashion, but the recording of these actions sometimes lacks detail or is kept in supplementary files. This creates risk for pupils because, in these cases, it is not immediately clear exactly what actions have been taken and the difference that they have made. Similarly, records of conversations between staff and pupils or parents and carers are held in additional files and can be sparse, meaning that it is hard to evaluate the effectiveness of this work. Leaders in the safeguarding and pastoral teams know pupils well and can recount events and conversations, suggesting that this is an administrative weakness. This is poor practice and needs to be improved.

This muddled record-keeping also makes it difficult to explore the work of leaders when parents consider the option of home educating their children. There have been allegations that leaders encouraged parents to remove their children from the school and home educate them in the interests of the school rather than the pupil. This practice is known as off-rolling. The MAT conducted its own investigation into these accusations when they were raised. They found that processes were not set out clearly or recorded well enough when parents started to explore the option of elective home education. These processes are now clear and recorded well.

We looked at the evidence around pupils who have left the school. We found that the MAT conclusions are reasonable. The steps they have taken to improve communication with parents and recording of conversations are sensible. We could not find evidence to support the allegations. Conversely, we found evidence of leaders working to keep pupils in school by making adaptations to timetables and providing extra support as required. Parents and pupils involved in this work are very positive about the difference it is making for them.

We also considered how effectively leaders deal with allegations of peer-on-peer abuse, including sexual abuse or harassment. We found much the same; work to support individual pupils is effective but the recording of this work lacks clarity and detail. As before, staff rely on their frequent conversations about pupils to make sure that everyone knows what they need to.

Work to educate pupils to recognise risk and be able to keep themselves safe more effectively is comprehensive. From the time they join the school, pupils follow a detailed and thoughtful curriculum that supports their learning about RSHE. Pupils are positive about these sessions. Older pupils, in particular, appreciate the way that staff adjust lessons to meet their needs. The content is carefully planned and evaluated to ensure that it is relevant to pupils. Staff listen to pupils and review RSHE learning carefully. They change plans quickly and thoughtfully when they need to respond to contextual events.

Pupils find the support that they receive from staff, especially the pastoral team, really helpful and reassuring. They say that there is always someone to talk to. They feel confident that any worry is taken seriously and acted on effectively, although some would appreciate speedier communication from staff.

Trustees and members of the local governing body have followed required processes to comply with their safeguarding duties. They discuss safeguarding with school leaders and ensure that required policies are in place. However, a policy update was not published to the school website until the inspection.

### **Additional support**

Officers at BET have supported school leaders to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities when training staff. They have produced useful materials and videos to help staff understand their responsibilities. Staff recall these well.

Officers have also helped trustees and local governors to understand and fulfil their duties, including those regarding safeguarding.

The CEO acted swiftly to commission an investigation when the allegations of off-rolling were made. The resulting findings included sensible recommendations for improving practice that were adopted right away. MAT leaders indicated the intention to act immediately to address the weak practice found during inspection.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Tighten record-keeping processes so that all information is joined up and has appropriate detail.
- Ensure that all administrative processes are followed precisely and required information is published.

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

Yours sincerely

Lucy English  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**