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Marais Leenders
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Leenders

Urgent inspection of Brentford School for Girls

Following my visit with Sarah Murphy, His Majesty's Inspector, and Jonathan Newby, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 6 October 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.

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 of pre-employment checks and a range of other documents relating to safeguarding. We met with the headteacher, groups of pupils and staff, the chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. We also reviewed documentation and records relating to attendance and behaviour.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

Main Findings

Leaders have clear systems and routines in place to safeguard pupils. Leaders make their expectations of staff clear. As a result, all staff understand their role in keeping pupils safe. Leaders maintain close oversight of these systems and routines, and act effectively to strengthen arrangements when needed. This helps to ensure the culture of safeguarding is strong and remains a high priority.

Leaders provide staff with thorough and regular safeguarding training. Training covers statutory content and is also tailored carefully to the context of the school. Staff value this training and the opportunities they have for regular dialogue about themes related to safeguarding. Staff are highly aware of the different indicators of abuse. They know how to report their concerns and do so without delay. As a result, leaders and staff are quick to identify and act on any safeguarding issues that arise. Staff also know how to report any concerns that they might have about adults' conduct and the importance of doing so. The whistle-blowing policy and procedures are detailed and are understood by staff.

Pupils feel safe at school. They know that there are adults they can speak to if they have a concern. Leaders take timely and suitable steps to support pupils when concerns are raised about their safety and well-being. They work closely with families and external agencies, including the local authority, to understand pupils' needs. This helps leaders to plan and put in place the right levels of support and care.

Pupils like the way that leaders and staff make sure that the school is a welcoming environment. They particularly appreciate how diversity is valued and celebrated. Pupils were clear that bullying is rare. Any instances of poor behaviour, including bullying, are not tolerated. Leaders and staff sort things out promptly and effectively. Pupils appreciate this. However, a small number of pupils said that the way instances are resolved can vary, depending on the member of staff.

Leaders have ensured the curriculum for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) is well designed. Curriculum content has been sequenced so that pupils revisit important ideas over time, particularly in Years 7 to 11. This helps pupils to develop a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe in different contexts. For example, pupils talk knowledgeably about the importance of healthy relationships, consent, and online safety. However, in the sixth form, there is less opportunity for students to revisit these important concepts. As a result, some students' understanding of these themes is less secure.

Those responsible for governance understand their statutory responsibilities. They receive annual safeguarding training. This helps them to analyse and question the detailed information they receive from leaders, and check that all aspects of safeguarding arrangements are suitable and rigorous.

Additional support

Leaders work closely with the local authority to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Leaders recently arranged for an external review of safeguarding arrangements to be carried out. Leaders have used the outcomes of this review effectively. They have reflected on and adapted current safeguarding practice, including strengthening arrangements where necessary.

Priorities for further improvement

- The curriculum for PSHE is not as clearly sequenced in the sixth form as it is in key stages 3 and 4. As a result, students revisit important ideas less frequently. This means their understanding of these issues is sometimes not as developed and deepened as well as it could be. Leaders should ensure that students in the sixth form have sufficient time to follow the intended PSHE curriculum, and explore the themes and subject content covered in sufficient depth.

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

Yours sincerely

Sophie Healey-Welch
His Majesty's Inspector