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15 June 2023

Panayiota Theodosiou  
Interim Principal  
The Bramble Academy  
Oxclose Lane  
Mansfield Woodhouse  
Mansfield  
Nottinghamshire  
NG19 8DF

Dear Miss Theodosiou

### **Requires improvement monitoring inspection of The Bramble Academy**

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 4 May 2023, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and took place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous graded (section 5) inspections.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and other senior leaders, the CEO of the Greenwood Academies Trust and other trust representatives the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also scrutinised documentation, visited lessons, spoke with parents and met with a group of staff. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

**The Bramble Academy continues to require improvement. Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to become good.**

### **Main findings**

Since the previous inspection, there has been considerable change. The school community has been through a great deal of turbulence. There have been several changes to the school's leadership. Staff turnover has been high. Some of this change slowed the initial pace of the school's improvement. The school joined the Greenwood Academies Trust in December 2022. The trust has brought much needed stability. New

school leaders are now receiving the high-quality support and challenge needed in order to bring about the rapid change required and that pupils within the school deserve. This internal support is effective. Staff welcome the changes that have been made. They trust that they will receive support should they need it. They value the additional professional development opportunities open to them. They appreciate leaders' consideration of their workload. Staff said that they feel listened to. They said that they are proud to work at the school.

A new headteacher, deputy headteacher and special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) are now in post. The leadership of the school is now much more secure. You are setting high expectations of what all pupils can achieve. Early signs suggest that pupils are living up to these expectations. Parents are thrilled with the new leadership arrangements. They appreciate the efforts that have been taken to engage the community in the school's improvement. Parents are now welcomed into the school to celebrate the successes of their child. Events such as the regular parent coffee mornings ensure that parents' views are heard. Parents said that the school 'really feels like it is on the up'.

Now that there is greater stability in leadership, improvements in teaching and curriculum planning can commence. With support from the trust, you are keen to ensure that the curriculum addresses the learning needs of the 'Bramble' pupils. However, this work is in the early stages of development. The curriculum is not yet sufficiently ambitious for all pupils. It does not yet ensure that gaps in pupils' knowledge are securely addressed or that pupils gain the knowledge they need to complete complex tasks. Pupils are not yet prepared well enough for their next learning stage.

Reading is a priority. The trust has invested heavily in two new libraries in the school. Pupils have access to books that reflect different cultures and traditions. Each classroom has a well-used reading area. Books are everywhere. However, the reading programme for early readers is still not well taught. There is a comprehensive curriculum in place, but it is inconsistently implemented by teachers. Readers who fall behind do not catch up quickly enough. Children in the early years do not get a good enough start to their reading journey. Much more work is needed to ensure that a well-planned and sequenced reading programme is in place.

The new SENCo is having a positive impact on the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have improved the systems for identifying and meeting pupils' needs. Teachers have received training. They are beginning to apply this training to support pupils with SEND more effectively in lessons. However, learning is not yet successfully adapted for pupils with SEND. Some of these pupils underachieve as a result.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Greenwood Academies Trust, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Nottinghamshire local authority. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Jayne Ashman  
**His Majesty's Inspector**