

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
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14 May 2024

John Page  
Headteacher  
Fairfield School  
White Lee Road  
Batley  
West Yorkshire  
WF17 8AS

Dear Mr Page

### **Urgent inspection of Fairfield School**

Following my visit with Hannah Millett, His Majesty's Inspector, to the school on 23 April 2024, 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 the 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 about aspects of the effectiveness of leadership and management in the school (including governance) and the behaviour and attitudes of pupils.

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, the electronic recording system for concerns and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. We met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher/designated safeguarding lead (DSL), groups of pupils, groups of staff, the chair of the board of governors and representatives of the local authority.

We reviewed governors' minutes, including a recent audit of safeguarding procedures, records of restraint and physical intervention (RPI) and pupils' behaviour management plans. In addition, we spoke to parents of pupils on behaviour plans to discuss their views on the use of restraint. Both inspectors walked the school during lessons and social times to observe pupils' behaviour and staff/pupil relationships.

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

### **Arrangements for safeguarding are effective.**

#### **Main findings**

The school places the safety and welfare of pupils firmly at the centre of all decision-making. There are robust systems in place to check the suitability of staff working in the school. This includes regular audits of personnel files and updates of information on staff who have worked at the school for extended periods of time. The school uses the electronic recording system effectively to manage safeguarding and behaviour incidents and concerns. Reporting mechanisms are clear. Leaders make sure that all staff receive regular, high-quality training and supervision. Staff talk confidently about the '15-minute rule' for raising urgent concerns and the less urgent referral system. Leaders act on concerns promptly and work closely with external agencies to provide the care that pupils need.

There is a calm and supportive atmosphere throughout the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Staff know pupils' individual needs well and are constantly adapting their approaches to meet needs. Where pupils need additional support with their behaviour, leaders help staff to put individualised support plans in place. These plans include RPI approaches where needed. These are discussed and agreed with parents and staff. Leaders have ensured that all staff are trained to use positive handling strategies as a first response, with RPI only used where necessary. Staff complete records, highlighting when RPI is used. The records are reviewed regularly by the DSL to identify any changes needed to pupils' behaviour support plans or staff training. Leaders seek support from external professionals to address any increasing needs.

In response to the concerns raised with Ofsted, inspectors scrutinised recent records of challenging behaviour and the resulting use of RPI. Evidence demonstrates that leaders respond quickly, reviewing and adjusting intervention strategies as appropriate. Leaders recognise that ongoing training and support will ensure that all staff can respond confidently and safely to extreme behaviour incidents.

#### **Additional support**

The school works well with the local authority safeguarding team and local authority designated officer to ensure that the arrangements for safeguarding are as effective as they can be. Governors provide regular scrutiny and oversight of safeguarding procedures, including the training of staff. They hold leaders to account effectively.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- The school, including the governing body, should work with the local authority to confirm that the school's RPI training and procedures include appropriate crisis intervention strategies that minimise risk to both pupils and staff.

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

Yours sincerely

Alex Thorp  
**His Majesty's Inspector**