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Clare Martin
Principal
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Dear Mrs Martin

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Bradford Girls' Grammar School

Following my visit with Alison Stephenson, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), Steve Wren (HMI), Phil Riozzi, Ofsted Inspector (OI), Philip Scott (OI) and Lucie Stephenson (OI), to your school on 6 and 7 July 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 during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection that took place in March 2019. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. We discussed the impact of the pandemic with you and have taken that into account in our evaluation.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

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

Yours sincerely

Michele Costello
Her Majesty's Inspector

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 6 and 7 July 2021

Context

A new principal, a head of primary school and a new senior leader with responsibility for English have been appointed during the pandemic. The designated safeguarding lead is now a member of the senior leadership team. Two new governors have joined the school in recent months. The school no longer has a sixth form. The last cohort of Year 13 students has now left the school.

The progress made towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation

Leaders have reviewed the primary and secondary curriculums this year. Leaders identified correctly that pupils are not learning some subjects, such as art and history, in sufficient depth across Years 7 to 9. They are addressing this. From September 2021, pupils will begin their GCSE studies in Year 10. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 has been planned to better match the national curriculum expectations.

Work has started this year to plan a more coherent and well-sequenced curriculum. Staff from both the primary and secondary phases are now working together to plan the curriculum across the school so that pupils can build on prior learning. In subjects such as physical education (PE), mathematics and science, curriculum leaders are clear about the crucial knowledge that pupils should remember. The curriculum is well sequenced in these subjects, with opportunities for pupils to revisit what they have been taught. However, in other subjects, such as history and art, curriculum plans do not clearly set out the important subject content that pupils should learn and remember. In these subjects, curriculum leaders have not had the support they need to improve the curriculum. The curriculum is not ambitious enough in these subjects.

Leaders have provided staff with training to deliver the phonics programme. Teachers in the primary phase are becoming more confident in matching the books that pupils read to the sounds that they know. However, some pupils who are struggling with reading are not identified quickly enough. Some staff do not provide the right support to help pupils to become confident readers quickly. Addressing this issue is a priority for leaders.

Leaders are taking steps to address pupils' poor behaviour, including the introduction of a new behaviour policy. Leaders have appointed extra staff to increase the capacity of the school's behaviour team. A new behaviour leader has recently been appointed. Leaders have introduced new systems to monitor pupils' behaviour, with more timely interventions to support pupils to improve their behaviour. There are early signs that this work is beginning to make a positive difference. In the primary phase, pupils behave well and have positive attitudes towards their learning. Nevertheless, there is still more to do to ensure behaviour

improves across the school. The pandemic has compounded the challenges faced by the school. There have been more incidents of poor behaviour leading to fixed term exclusions in the secondary phase. There has also been an increase in bullying incidents and some pupils and parents do not feel that these are always managed well. Leaders need to ensure that low-level disruption is not tolerated and that staff are supported to ensure that there is a calm, orderly and respectful environment in the secondary phase. These are crucial priorities for the school.

Leaders are taking firm action to address incidents of racist and discriminatory language. The principal has established a staff and pupil 'Equality Diversity and Inclusion Committee'. The local police have also talked to pupils in assemblies. Pupils were recently involved in a diversity week. Leaders acknowledge that there is still work to do to ensure that all pupils are tolerant and respectful of others.

Pupils learn about a range of risks to their safety. However, some pupils do not have a secure understanding of the dangers of radicalisation or the importance of British values. Leaders have taken some steps to review the curriculum for personal, social and emotional development. They recognise that there is more to do to ensure that pupils have a secure understanding of risks they may face and that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

A number of parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, are unhappy with the school, particularly in relation to communication between home and school. Leaders know that they need to establish much stronger relationships with parents. They are beginning to take action to address this. This work is in the early stages of development.

Leaders work effectively with a range of external agencies to provide support for pupils and their families when needed. Leaders ensure that there are appropriate records of the work to support pupils who are at risk of harm. When there are allegations against staff, leaders seek advice from the designated officer and follow statutory guidance. However, leaders should ensure that outcomes from any investigation into allegations against staff are thoroughly recorded.

Most pupils who made their views known to inspectors feel that there is an adult in school who they can talk to if they have any worries or concerns. Most pupils are confident that staff will take action to help them. However, there are some pupils who do not share this confidence. Some pupils feel that they are unfairly treated by staff. There is still work to do to ensure that there are positive relationships between pupils and staff.

Most staff are positive about the professional development they receive. They told inspectors that the recent focus on primary and secondary staff working closely together is helping them to improve the curriculum. Staff who spoke with inspectors feel that leaders consider their workload. However, the responses from staff to

Ofsted's staff survey were more mixed about whether leaders take account of their workload.

Governors have a realistic view of the school's areas for development. They are challenging leaders to improve aspects of the school that are not good enough. Governors are not complacent. They know that significant improvements are still needed in the school.

Additional support

Since September 2020, leaders and governors have commissioned a number of external reviews of aspects of the school's work. Leaders are working with external organisations and local school networks to help them to improve the school. Leaders talk positively about the support they are receiving.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the principal, head of the primary school and other senior leaders. Inspectors also met with pupils in every year group and a number of staff. An inspector met with four governors, including the chair and vice chair of the governing body. An inspector held meetings with parents, including by telephone. Inspectors visited lessons, met with curriculum leaders and talked to pupils about their work in history, PE, mathematics, science, reading and art. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour on corridors, during breaks and lunchtimes, and at the start and end of the school day. Inspectors took account of the views of 54 members of staff who responded to Ofsted's staff survey and 114 responses to Ofsted's parent survey, Parent View.