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5 March 2024

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Dear Mr Willis

Requires improvement monitoring inspection of Bay House School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 8 February 2024, 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 received a judgement of requires improvement at its previous graded (section 5) inspection.

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's overall effectiveness, but to identify and report on the school's progress. It is to highlight to the school and parents any improvements that school leaders have made since the school's previous graded inspection.

During the inspection, Toby Martlew, His Majesty's Inspector, and I discussed with you the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We also discussed this with the interim chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust, trustees and other senior leaders. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We also visited lessons, met with groups of pupils, looked at workbooks, scrutinised school documents and sought the views of staff. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

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 have been significant changes in the leadership at the school. You started in your role as headteacher in January 2023. The capacity of the

senior leadership team has been extended with the development of four new positions and a restructure of the areas of responsibility that leaders have. This has added clarity around leaders' roles and provided greater capacity to strengthen the areas of improvement identified at the previous inspection. There has also been a change in the leadership of the trust, with an interim CEO appointed. For this monitoring visit, I focused on those areas judged to require improvement in the previous inspection: quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development, sixth-form provision and leadership and management (including safeguarding).

Curriculum leaders have reviewed their plans to ensure that what is taught to pupils matches the ambition of the national curriculum. Leaders are now focused on making improvements to staff checks of pupils' understanding. There are a range of appropriate assessment and feedback approaches in action across the school. As a result, many pupils can clearly explain what they are doing well and how they might further improve. In some curriculum areas, the information gathered by staff in lessons is used effectively to inform the next stages of their teaching. This means that pupils are better able to articulate what they know and can do as a result of the taught curriculum. However, the effective and efficient use of assessment is not yet consistent across all subjects.

In addition, your personal, social, health and relationships education (PSHRE) programme has been reviewed and religious education (RE) lessons are now being taught to all pupils. As a result, pupils across the school are offered a broader curriculum than was the case at the previous inspection. PSHRE and RE lessons are helping pupils to be better informed about the society they live in and to embed the school values that underpin the school drive 'towards a happier, safer, more successful school'. The content of these lessons teach pupils important knowledge about preparation for the next stages of education, including how to stay safe. However, not all pupils yet have a detailed and age-appropriate understanding of key concepts, including healthy relationships and discrimination. There is further work to do to ensure that the teaching of the intended curriculum in RE and PSHRE meets your expectations, and that lesson activities support pupils to understand the context in which they live.

'Care' is a word that featured in many pupil group discussions, with many pupils positively sharing how they felt cared for by staff. They know who to go to if they have a concern or if they need help. They appreciate the efforts that staff make to support them to stay safe and learn well in school. As a result, they feel valued by staff.

You have rightly prioritised improving pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Since the previous inspection, changes to the behaviour policy and increased staff presence have supported improvements in pupils' conduct in lessons and around school. Staff comment that the difference is noticeable, and they now feel better supported by leaders. However, at times, there is a lack of consistency in how poor behaviour is managed by staff. As a result, pupils report that behaviour remains a challenge in some areas of the school. There are also a small number of pupils who are less satisfied with behaviour and their perceptions do not yet align to leaders' intent and actions. However, most pupils agree that disruption in lessons and around school has reduced since the previous inspection.

Leaders know that there is more to do to support all staff to understand and consistently follow the behaviour policy to support a calm and orderly atmosphere around the school, both in and out of lessons.

There are still some pupils who find it challenging to meet leaders' high expectations for behaviour. Suspensions have understandably risen while you implement your new expectations. However, the recording is accurate and appropriately detailed. Staff feel supported in managing poor behaviour because they are more confident in the system. However, you are in the early stages of using your analysis of behaviour to review the impact of your actions effectively. More work could be done to monitor the impact of staff training and approaches to support staff to consistently follow the school's behaviour policy and manage behaviour that does not meet their shared expectations. Leaders are hopeful that upcoming changes to the school site to support pupil movement around the school and a reconfiguration of spaces will further reduce out-of-lesson incidents of behaviour that does not meet leaders' expectations.

Other areas of behaviour and attitudes have seen more rapid improvement since the previous inspection. Leaders are rightly proud of improvements to attendance and a reduction in the number of pupils who are persistently absent. There is an effective system in place to identify and appropriately support pupils whose attendance prevents them from benefiting from the opportunities that the school provides. Many improvements are as a result of improved communication with parents to help them to understand the importance of regular attendance. The increased pastoral team is also helping to shift attitudes. Leaders are confident that a concerted effort to reduce disruption in school and provide pupils with higher quality education is helping to support improvement in attendance.

The school has received support from a multi-academy trust with which they will be merging. The sharing of clear systems and structures to support teacher planning and continuous professional development (CPD) designed to improve teaching have been valued by staff. Regular sharing of effective practice across the school through newsletters and detailed CPD, focusing on, for example, adaptive practice, is leading to effective strategies being employed regularly in the classroom. This means that all pupils, including those with special education needs and/or disabilities, have access to an ambitious curriculum and are well supported to access it and achieve well. Furthermore, staff feel able to make suggestions to inform the CPD offer and are encouraged by further training to support early reading. At present, pupils' reading ages are checked and there is intervention for those who need it. Colleagues from the trust have also supported subject-level leadership across the school. Leaders have rightly recognised that some approaches to tackle the areas of improvement from the previous inspection are in the early stages of implementation. They are keen to employ stronger methods of reviewing what is working to inform the school's next steps.

Those responsible for governance have prioritised the need for improvement at the school. They have welcomed the growing relationship with leaders across the trust with which they will merge. They are embracing new ways of working, which ensure that they

have the information that they need to provide both support and hold leaders to account. The additional capacity through the upcoming merger has been used well by leaders in the school. This is helping to support leaders at all levels to meet their ambition of high-quality education for all. Leaders have been mindful of workload and well-being when bringing in necessary changes and are providing opportunities to seek feedback from staff. Many staff speak positively about the improvements and are optimistic about the future. Some changes are in the earliest stages, and this work needs to continue.

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

Yours sincerely

Hanna Miller
His Majesty's Inspector