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Mr James Tickle
Principal
The Roundhill Academy
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Dear Mr Tickle

No formal designation inspection of The Roundhill Academy

Following my visit with Rachel Tordoff, Her Majesty's Inspector, to the school on 25 and 26 September 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about the quality of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and aspects of pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare.

Evidence

Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders, teachers and support staff. They also met with members of the local governing body, the chief executive officer of the trust and the vice-chair of the board of trustees. The lead inspector spoke by telephone with a director of one of the school's off-site alternative providers. Inspectors read a range of documents, including school improvement plans and those relating to the school's use of additional funding. They looked at the minutes of meetings of the local governing body and the board of trustees. Inspectors scrutinised the single central record, the school's checks on the suitability of staff, and records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.

Inspectors visited 10 lessons, from a range of subjects and all year groups, and two morning tutor-period sessions. They met formally with groups of pupils and also spoke with pupils in their lessons and informally around school.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

Context

The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils who are of White British heritage is above the national average. A minority of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is lower than average. There have been no significant changes to the leadership of the school since the last inspection, in October 2017. Following the school's expansion, 2018 saw the second cohort of Year 11 pupils sit their GCSE examinations. The school is part of the Bradgate Education Partnership multi-academy trust. Governance is provided by the board of trustees and a local governing body.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

The leadership of the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is a strength of the school. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) for the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is extremely knowledgeable and works effectively with other leaders and staff to ensure that the needs of this vulnerable group of pupils are met. She has reviewed the register of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to ensure that their needs are accurately identified, and has provided guidance and training to staff to support them in meeting these pupils' needs. The SENCo works closely with the teaching, learning and assessment leader to monitor the provision for pupils in the classroom. She also liaises closely with the personal development and welfare leader to support pupils' pastoral needs. The attendance of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has improved, but further improvement is necessary. The SENCo liaises with external agencies, making sure that pupils receive the additional, specialist help they need, as quickly as possible. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities made stronger progress from their starting points in 2018 than in previous years. Leaders' tracking information indicates that current pupils are also making faster progress.

Leaders ensure that pupils are safeguarded and their well-being is promoted through all aspects of school life. The designated safeguarding leader is well supported by pastoral staff. Staff are extremely knowledgeable about individual pupils' needs and circumstances, and monitor closely their safety and well-being. They take appropriate action when they have concerns, liaising with external agencies when necessary. However, record keeping of individual safeguarding concerns is not as regular or precise as it might be and is dependent on the knowledge of the designated safeguarding leader. Leaders have accepted the need to increase the robustness in this area of their work. Checks on the suitability of staff to work with children meet statutory guidance.

Staff are well trained and knowledgeable about safeguarding matters. For example, staff have received training in the risks posed by forced marriage and female genital mutilation. Leaders provide regular updates about safeguarding developments and about issues that affect individual pupils. Staff maintain pupils' interests at the heart of all they do. Pupils know whom they can speak with when they have concerns. They feel safe. Pupils said that bullying does occasionally occur, but staff deal with any incidents quickly and effectively.

The small number of pupils who attend off-site provision are closely monitored to ensure their safety and well-being. Leaders regularly liaise with providers, checking pupils' attendance, following up absences and ensuring that pupils' personal development and welfare are promoted.

The appointment of the new attendance officer has contributed to the school's safeguarding arrangements by bringing about improvements to the monitoring of whole-school attendance. Absences are quickly checked each morning to ensure pupils' safety. The coding of absences is rigorous and accurate. Unauthorised absences are followed up and checked thoroughly.

Leaders have designed a curriculum that promotes pupils' safety and well-being. It is well thought out and reflects national issues, as well as the school's local context. Pupils learn about relevant issues through current news stories that capture pupils' interests and help them understand how to keep themselves safe.

The SPIRE (spiritual self, physical, intellectual, relational, emotional) programme provides individualised support to the small number of pupils who need help to succeed in school. It also provides additional support for pupils returning to school following a prolonged absence, for example after a lengthy illness. Pupils told inspectors that they value the support it provides to help them manage their concerns and anxieties about their education.

Leaders modified the behaviour policy in September 2017. It is clear and specific, and is understood by all pupils and staff. As a result of raised expectations, there was an initial increase in the number of recorded incidents of poor behaviour, particularly in Years 7 and 8. Leaders' tracking information indicates a more recent reduction in incidents, including in these year groups. Nevertheless, a greater proportion of incidents still involve the current Year 8 cohort of pupils. The nature of incidents that are recorded also suggests that behaviour has improved, as many of the incidents that are recorded are less serious than in the past.

The number of fixed-term exclusions had increased by the end of the last academic year. The proportion of pupils who received more than one fixed-term exclusion also increased, particularly for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils, White British pupils, and boys. The work to support pupils to manage their behaviour, for example, the use of behaviour support plans, is beginning to bear fruit and recently the proportion of pupils who are excluded has

begun to decline. For a small number of pupils, this support has not resulted in improved behaviour and, as a result, some pupils receive repeat exclusions.

The last inspection identified the need to improve pupils' attendance. Leaders have shared their raised expectations with pupils, parents, carers and staff. The attendance officer holds 'attendance clinics' to support pupils by identifying barriers to attending and helping pupils to overcome them. Pupils with whom inspectors spoke clearly explained the importance of regular attendance. Pastoral leaders now hold tutors to greater account for the attendance of pupils in their tutor groups. Whole-school attendance has improved slightly, as has that of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Nevertheless, attendance for all groups of pupils is below national averages. Furthermore, in recent years, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school has been considerably higher than the national average, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Improving attendance and reducing the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent remain key priorities for improvement.

External support

The board of trustees and the local governing body provide effective challenge and support. Leaders work with other schools in the trust and also with schools in the local area to share good practice. The school is part of the Melton Behaviour Partnership, which provides effective support to promote pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare. As part of this partnership, a small number of pupils attend alternative, off-site education, provided by the Melton Learning Hub and the Youth Education Project. These pupils' needs are well met.

Priorities for further improvement

- Improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, particularly by reducing the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school.
- Reduce the number of pupils who are repeatedly excluded from school.
- Ensure that leaders rigorously and regularly review records of safeguarding concerns, making certain that they are precise, accurate and detailed.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Bradgate Education Partnership multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Leicestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Deborah Mosley
Her Majesty's Inspector