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Dianna Gwilliams, Chair of the Board of Trustees  
Paul Kennedy, Chief Executive Officer  
The Good Shepherd Trust  
Academies Office  
Larch Avenue  
Guildford  
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Dear Mrs Gwilliams and Mr Kennedy

Summary evaluation of The Good Shepherd Trust

Following the summary evaluation of The Good Shepherd Trust (or 'the trust') on 6 to 9 March 2023 when I was accompanied by Sally Hannaford, Ofsted Inspector and Claire Fortey, Ofsted inspector, I am writing on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the findings.

Thank you for your cooperation during our visit to the trust in March. Please pass on our thanks to your staff and other stakeholders who kindly gave up their time to meet us.

The findings from the summary evaluation and a wider consideration of the trust's overall performance are set out below.

### **Summary of evidence gathering activities**

For stage 1 of this summary evaluation, four schools were inspected between September 2022 and November 2022. All these inspections were carried out under either section 5 or 8 of the Education Act 2005 (the Act), as amended.

The inspection outcomes were:

- one school improved from inadequate to good
- one school improved from requires improvement to good
- one school retained their judgement of good
- one school declined from good to inadequate.

Over the course of the on-site visit to the trust, discussions were held with you and other senior and operational staff. We met with seven representatives of the board of trustees, including the chair and the vice-chair of the board, the chair of the trustee education committee and the director of education for the diocese of Guildford. We also met with five chairs of the local committees (LCs). We visited six trust schools and carried out three telephone surveys of schools that had not been inspected during stage 1 of the summary evaluation process. In each of these visits and telephone surveys we met with the principal/headteacher, other senior leaders, and a selection of leaders responsible for subjects.

## **Context**

The Good Shepherd Trust is a multi-phase academy trust. The trust comprises 17 primary schools and one secondary school. Pupils at the trust's schools range from the ages of three to 16. The schools are located in the local authorities of Surrey and Hampshire. All the schools in the trust, apart from Farnborough Grange Nursery & Infant Community School, have a religious character. The trust was established in 2013. Two schools have joined the trust in the past 18 months.

The trust's schools vary in size from just below 64 pupils in Scott Broadwood Church of England Infant School to around 697 pupils in Christ's College, Guildford.

The trust board is made up of 10 trustees. This group is responsible for the strategic oversight and performance of the trust and its schools.

## **Main findings**

Currently, the inspection outcomes for the trust's academies, including the most recent inspections, are as follows:

- one school is judged to be outstanding
- 13 schools are judged to be good
- one school is judged to require improvement
- three schools are judged to be inadequate
- out of the 18 schools in the trust: four schools have received an ungraded inspection, and remained good, since joining the trust; eight schools have received a graded inspection since joining the trust. Of these, one school was judged to be inadequate; one school was judged to require improvement; one school remained good; three schools improved from requires improvement to be good and two schools improved from inadequate to be good.
- five schools have yet to be inspected since joining the trust. Of these, two of their predecessor schools were judged inadequate, one to require improvement and two were good when last inspected.

### **Impact of the trust on its academies – governance and delegation**

- Since joining the trust in 2020, you have worked with trustees to develop a strong strategic direction based on ensuring that trust schools remain focused on improving the education of pupils while trust leaders provide finance, recruitment and human resources services. You refer to this as 'reducing the noise' and school leaders feel that this has helped them to focus on pupils' education and learning.
- Trust leaders aim to support schools to improve, be financially stable, provide efficient central services and attract, retain and develop the best staff. However, the trust's published vision and aims are not explicitly aspirational for the children in trust schools and not all stakeholders, including members of the local governing committees, understand what the trust stands for. Trust leaders and trustees share an ambition for ensuring that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils receive the best education. However, this is not reflected strongly enough in the trust's vision and values.
- Astute and skilled trust leaders manage finance and resource management effectively. They oversee budgets carefully and regularly review individual schools' needs so that they can implement efficiencies and value for money is achieved.
- Members of the LCs are committed to school improvement and to providing the best education for their pupils. They have a strong level of expertise and knowledge, particularly in regard to safeguarding.
- Although trustees work closely with trust leaders and some school leaders, they are not clear about how to challenge and hold leaders to account highly effectively. This is because trustees do not understand fully the information that they are provided with by trust leaders and how to use it to question and challenge trust leaders. This area needs strengthening so that trustees develop their knowledge of how to accurately measure the impact of trust leaders' actions.

### **Impact of the trust on its academies – leadership and management**

- At the heart of their work, trust leaders embrace a clear moral purpose and an ambition to provide positive educational experiences for all their children. Trust leaders oversee a mixture of trust-wide policies and individual school policies. The safeguarding policy and staff code of conduct, for example, provide a consistent trust-wide approach. Trust leaders check that these policies are properly implemented through monitoring visits, recorded on

notes of visit, and through training materials that are sent into schools. You are committed to ensuring that school leaders design their own curriculum policies. However, the lack of a trust-wide curriculum policy means that school leaders are not aware of how the trust expects schools to design a strong curriculum. This means that some schools have not been as successful as they could be in developing highly effective curriculums.

- Trust leaders have a positive track record of supporting schools to improve and a purposeful approach to school improvement. Lines of accountability are clear within the trust structure. Headteachers are held to account by the trust's directors through performance management meetings, school monitoring visits and the 'team around the school' meetings. Trust leaders use these meetings to hold school leaders to account, offering support and challenge when necessary.
- The trust's school improvement strategy is not as effective as it could be. Although there are many positive aspects to the improvement work carried out by trust leaders, the trust's work to improve reading is not always targeted where it is needed most. For example, some schools which have strong approaches to teaching reading receive the same support as those schools where the approach to reading is weaker.

### **Impact of the trust on its academies – curriculum and quality of education**

- Trust leaders believe that each school should design their own curriculum so that it meets the needs of the school's locality and their pupils. There are several trust-wide curriculum principles operating in trust schools, such as particular approaches to early years education and reading. However, trust leaders and trustees are in the process of defining the principles that underpin curriculum development and how these include ensuring that the curriculum is ambitious for pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils.
- School leaders value the trust's curriculum network group and the subject network meetings greatly. These networks are led by knowledgeable colleagues from different schools within the trust. Staff involved in the meetings believe that they are an effective way of sharing strong practice within each subject across the trust's schools. However, these networks do not have a trust-wide curriculum policy to shape their work, and the curriculum principles are sometimes too broad to enable consistency between the work of different networks.
- Outside agencies are often involved in order to provide external views on best practice. For example, members of the National Association for Special Educational Needs recently contributed to trust-wide training. This was viewed as valuable by school leaders.

- In several trust schools, school-to-school support is effective in raising standards. Staff regularly train and share strong practice with staff in other trust schools. Leaders report that they can see the impact of support measures put in place for them and facilitated by trust leaders.
- A director of education ensures that schools that need the most support are prioritised. These schools receive more frequent visits from the trust's directors of education who are refining their approach to using information from schools to determine their need.

### **Impact of the trust on its academies – Behaviour and Attitudes**

- Trust leaders recognise that behaviour and attitudes across the trust have not received as much attention in the past as they would have liked. They are committed to putting resources into centralising leadership oversight in this area and have recently appointed a trust leader for behaviour, inclusion and safeguarding.
- The trust's approach to monitoring and assessing behaviour and attitudes is developing well. The new leader has quickly got to grips with analysing schools' information about pupils' behaviour and rates of suspension. They have offered well-received support to schools where this area could be improved further. However, trust leaders have not yet developed fully their analysis of behaviour information. For example, they do not routinely use information that could tell them about the effectiveness of leaders' actions, such as the proportion of pupils removed from lessons or the numbers of bullying incidents reported by trust schools.
- Trust leaders are clear that a more consistent approach is needed at trust level, particularly with the monitoring of the behaviour and attitudes of pupils from vulnerable groups. For example, trust leaders do not have clear oversight of how well schools use alternative provision, if pupils are placed appropriately and the impact of these placements on pupils.
- Across the trust's schools pupils' absence and persistent absence have reduced since the COVID-19 pandemic and is below the national rate. Trust leaders continue to prioritise and closely monitor pupils' attendance. The range of strategies employed by trust leaders is effective.

### **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding was judged to be effective in all the schools that were inspected as part of stage 1 of this summary evaluation.

New trust leadership in safeguarding is already having a positive impact. Their recent work has focused on identifying common contextual issues in safeguarding across

trust schools. Recently they have highlighted the increasing numbers of online safety concerns. The trust has responded positively to these issues by providing relevant updates and additional training to school leaders.

Trust leaders provide safeguarding training materials to schools on a regular basis, alongside updates in the trust's weekly bulletin. School leaders feel that the support and monitoring of safeguarding procedures in schools are rigorous and that trust leaders add value to what schools do in this area. The trust also provides supervision for school designated safeguarding leads. This contributes to improving well-being of these staff

Trust staff have strong knowledge about safeguarding and they use this to ensure that safeguarding systems in their schools are effective. They ensure that school staff know how to report concerns and use the newly introduced management information system to ensure that concerns about pupils are reported accurately and quickly. Staff recruitment processes are checked regularly by school and trust leaders, and members of the LCs.

## **Recommendations**

- Review the trust's vision and values so that they communicate high aspirations for the trust's children, and particularly for those with SEND and those who are disadvantaged, in a way that is understood by all stakeholders.
- Improve how well trustees challenge and hold leaders to account by increasing their understanding of how well trust schools are performing, including their use of information about pupils' achievement.
- Ensure that trust leaders develop a trust-wide curriculum policy that clarifies the governance oversight of the curriculum and refines the trust's defining principles of curriculum development.
- Ensure that trust leaders monitor the impact of school leaders' actions more closely, including the extent to which school leaders meet the objectives on their school improvement plans.
- Continue to improve quality assurance processes, particularly for pupils' achievement, behaviour and attitudes so that trust leaders are assured that their actions are having a significant impact. This should include keeping a closer eye on pupils that attend alternative provisions, so that trust leaders are assured about the appropriateness and impact of placements.

Yours sincerely

Harry Ingham  
**Senior His Majesty's Inspector**

**Annex: Academies that are part of the trust**

School Information				Most recent inspection		
URN	School name	Local Authority	Date joined trust	Does the inspection relate to the school in its current form?	Inspection date	OE grade
146781	St Mark and All Saints Church of England Primary	Surrey	2019-04-01	YES	2017-02-01	4
140026	St Mary's Church of England Primary School	Surrey	2013-11-01	YES	2019-02-06	2
140028	St Paul's CofE Primary School	Surrey	2014-04-01	YES	2022-11-30	2

School Information				Most recent inspection		
URN	School name	Local Authority	Date joined trust	Does the inspection relate to the school in its current form?	Inspection date	OE grade
144899	Farnborough Grange Nursery & Infant Community School	Hampshire	2017-09-01	YES	2022-09-28	4
141294	Ashley Church of England Primary School	Surrey	2014-09-01	YES	2021-11-17	3
145278	Potters Gate CofE Primary School	Surrey	2017-12-01	YES	2016-05-12	2
139721	St John's Church of England Primary School	Surrey	2013-11-01	YES	2016-09-21	2
139920	The Holme Church of England Primary School	Hampshire	2013-09-01	YES	2017-09-20	2
142083	The Weald CofE Primary School	Surrey	2015-09-01	YES	2022-09-14	2
144330	St Andrew's Church of England Infant School	Surrey	2017-03-01	YES	2014-01-24	2



School Information				Most recent inspection		
URN	School name	Local Authority	Date joined trust	Does the inspection relate to the school in its current form?	Inspection date	OE grade
143627	Waverley Abbey CofE Junior School	Surrey	2016-12-01	YES	2014-06-05	2
141446	Queen Eleanor's Church of England School	Surrey	2014-10-01	YES	2013-01-11	2
146419	Ottershaw Christ Church Church of England Junior School	Surrey	2019-03-01	YES	2016-03-17	2
146420	Ottershaw Christ Church Church of England Infant School	Surrey	2019-03-01	YES	2016-02-04	2
146438	Surrey Hills All Saints Primary School	Surrey	2018-12-01	YES	2017-11-09	4
142490	Christ's College, Guildford	Surrey	2015-12-01	YES	2022-10-05	2
149388	Scott-Broadwood CofE Infant School	Surrey	2022-10-01	YES	2013-05-22	2

\*Schools highlighted received either a graded, ungraded or monitoring inspection in stage 1 of the MAT SE