

CONDITION REPORT

PERIMETER FENCING

at

Peel Brow Primary School

Fir St
Ramsbottom,
Bury
BL0 0BJ

prepared for

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Vision Multi Academy Trust

Vision House
Higher Ln
Whitefield
Manchester
M45 7FX

OVERALL CONDITION/PRIORITY RATING: D1

Prepared by:

Stuart Jenness BSc (Hons) MRICS

Date of Issue: July 2026



1.0 Executive Summary

An elemental safeguarding condition survey was undertaken to assess the perimeter fencing, access points, and boundary security across the school estate. The purpose of this inspection was to identify physical safeguarding vulnerabilities, evaluate their impact on pupil safety and site control, and determine whether the existing boundary arrangements comply with statutory safeguarding duties and current DfE expectations.

The survey confirms that the perimeter boundaries are in poor overall condition, with multiple areas where fencing is damaged, insecure, climbable, or missing entirely. Several sections of the boundary present unrestricted access to and from the site, increasing the risk of intruders entering the premises and pupils (particularly those with identified vulnerabilities) absconding from controlled areas. These issues constitute clear safeguarding deficiencies and expose the school to ongoing and escalating risk.

Key defects include structural failure of concrete and wire mesh fencing, significant gaps beneath and between panels, corroded or missing fixings, and areas where sections have collapsed or are unsupported. Several gates do not engage correctly, can be forced open without tools, or lack compliant locking mechanisms. In certain locations, boundary heights fall below the minimum safeguarding threshold and do not meet modern standards such as BS 1722, Secured by Design (SBD) principles, or DfE Output Specification guidance relating to the secure separation of school sites from public land.

The school has experienced repeated safeguarding incidents linked directly to these boundary weaknesses. Evidence reviewed during the survey - including incident logs, security reports, and headteacher statements - confirms that unauthorised entry, attempted access, and pupil absconding have occurred at multiple boundary points. These issues place a measurable burden on staff supervision, requiring elevated monitoring and reactive response to maintain safety. The condition of the fencing is therefore not only a facilities matter but a clear operational safeguarding risk.

Temporary measures implemented by the school, including ad hoc patch repairs and additional supervision at high-risk areas, have failed to provide a reliable or sustainable solution. Many defects are now beyond economic repair due to deterioration, unsuitable original construction, and lack of structural integrity. The boundary is no longer capable of providing the level of protection, control, and situational security required in a modern safeguarding-led educational environment.

Failure to address these risks leaves the school vulnerable to continued safeguarding breaches, potential injury to pupils or staff, reputational damage, and non-compliance with statutory duties under Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the Occupiers' Liability Act 1957, and the Education (School Premises) Regulations.

This report recommends a comprehensive programme of boundary replacement and rationalisation, adopting robust, tamper-resistant fencing systems designed in accordance with BS 1722, SBD guidance, and relevant DfE standards. A full upgrade represents the only viable means of restoring compliance, improving site security, and ensuring a safe environment that supports pupil welfare and effective safeguarding practice.

Location	Element	Sub-Element	Condition Grade	Priority Grade	BCIS Predicted Lifespan (years)	Estimated Age (years)	Years Exceeding Expected Age
Site	Perimeter Fence	Wire chain link fencing	D	1	20	40-50	20+



2.0 Methodology

The survey was undertaken through a combination of visual inspection, operational review, and evidence-based risk assessment. The methodology was designed to reflect best practice in building surveying, DfE safeguarding requirements, and relevant technical and statutory frameworks.

Site Inspection

A full site walkover was conducted by a Chartered Building Surveyor. The inspection included:

- All perimeter fence lines, boundary walls, railings, hedges and natural boundaries.
 - All pedestrian and vehicular access points, including controlled entry systems.
 - Vulnerable areas such as:
 - Rear or concealed boundaries
 - Sections adjacent to public rights of way
 - Areas bordering residential properties
 - Boundaries near playgrounds or SEND external spaces
 - Service yards, bin stores, and delivery areas
- Inspection was completed at ground level, with photographic evidence collected to document significant defects, vulnerabilities, and non-compliant elements.

Review of Documentation

The following documentation was reviewed where provided:

- Site safeguarding incident logs (unauthorised access, perimeter breaches, absconding).
- Behaviour and safeguarding reports from senior leaders.
- Maintenance and repair records relating to fencing and gates.
- Any previous safeguarding audit findings (Trust or external).
- Feedback from the school's DSL and site team regarding operational challenges.

This documentary review allowed issues to be contextualised against known incidents and safeguarding concerns.

Compliance Benchmarking

Observed conditions were compared against relevant statutory and technical requirements including:

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025** – ensuring physical security supports safeguarding duties.
- **Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999** – requirement to provide a safe and secure environment.
- **Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974** – duty to ensure premises are safe for occupants.
- **BS 1722 Series – Fencing Standards** – compliance of height, design and condition.
- **Building Regulations – Part B (Fire) & Part Q (Security)**, where relevant.
- **DfE Output Specification 2025 – Annex 2F: Site Security** – expectations for secure boundaries.
- **Secured by Design (SBD) Schools Guidance** – principles relating to hostile intrusion resistance.

Risk Assessment Approach

Defects and vulnerabilities were categorised using a risk-based assessment considering:

- Likelihood of breach or safeguarding incident.
- Severity of risk to pupils, staff or unauthorised individuals.
- Location sensitivity (e.g., SEND areas, early years, secluded boundaries).
- Evidence of previous breaches or attempted access.
- Degree of statutory or guidance non-compliance.



Assessment was conducted using a standardised red–amber–green framework to maintain consistency with the Trust’s GEMS risk model and CIF scoring expectations.

Limitations

The survey was non-invasive. No excavations, dismantling of fencing systems or specialist structural testing was undertaken. Observations relate to visible and reasonably accessible areas at the time of inspection. Limitations arising from vegetation, locked enclosures or other obstructions are noted where relevant.

3.0 Findings

The condition of the school’s perimeter fencing and boundary security measures varies across the site, but several key areas exhibit deterioration to a degree that compromises the safeguarding function of the boundary. In numerous locations, the fencing has reached the end of its serviceable life, with significant corrosion to posts and rails, deformation of panels, and widespread failures of fixings and weld points. These defects collectively undermine the structural integrity of the fencing system, rendering it no longer capable of resisting climbing, forced entry, or accidental impact. Areas adjacent to high-use pupil routes and secluded boundary lines show the most advanced deterioration, suggesting a combination of age, persistent exposure, and historic vandalism.

Inspection along the north and east boundaries identified extensive sections where the top of the fencing has been pushed down causing it to deform and make it easy for the students to exit the site or for unauthorised individuals to gain entry. In several areas, posts have lost vertical alignment due to soil movement and insufficient foundation support, resulting in leaning fence runs and compromised panel engagement. This instability increases the vulnerability of these boundaries to environmental forces, anti-social behaviour, or purposeful breach. The fencing adjacent to the motorway and the public foot path is notably unstable, with movement observed under light hand pressure.

Vegetation growth, particularly along the northern perimeter, is contributing to boundary degradation. Overgrown foliage is exerting pressure on fence lines, displacing posts, and obscuring visibility, creating blind spots that hinder surveillance and natural monitoring. Dense vegetation also provides concealment opportunities for unauthorised individuals and makes breaches more difficult for staff to detect in real time. This significantly reduces the safeguarding reliability of this part of the perimeter.

Operational evidence provided by the school indicates that these defects are contributing to safeguarding incidents, including attempted intrusions, unauthorised access during unstaffed periods, and pupil absconding. Staff report increasing difficulty in maintaining safe control of the boundary, particularly during arrival and dispersal times, and during emergency evacuation drills when large pupil movements occur. In colder months, areas with poor lighting and blind corners heighten these vulnerabilities further, as the degraded fencing offers minimal deterrent value.

Overall, the condition of the perimeter fencing and associated boundary elements presents a material safeguarding risk. The cumulative impact of age-related failure, physical deterioration, inadequate repairs, and structural instability means that the boundary cannot reliably fulfil its intended function. The current condition does not meet the expectations set out in KCSIE 2025, the Education (School Premises) Regulations, or DfE Output Specification Annex 2F. Without significant intervention, the boundary will continue to deteriorate, increasing risk to pupils, staff, and visitors, and placing ongoing pressure on operational management and supervision arrangements.



4.0 Statutory and Compliance Risks

The current condition of the school's perimeter fencing and boundary security arrangements presents several areas of statutory non-compliance and exposes the Trust to significant legal, safeguarding, and operational risk. The Education (School Premises) Regulations require schools to provide secure external boundaries that prevent unauthorised entry and protect pupils from leaving the site unsupervised. The observed defects, including corroded fence panels, unstable posts, collapsed sections demonstrate that the existing perimeter is no longer capable of reliably meeting these regulatory expectations. In its present state, the boundary does not offer sufficient deterrence, control, or physical resistance to unauthorised access.

In addition, the deficiencies identified conflict with the safeguarding requirements set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025, which places a clear duty on schools and Trusts to ensure that the physical environment does not expose pupils to avoidable harm. The current vulnerabilities, including areas where children could exit unnoticed or where individuals from the public realm could enter the site, represent foreseeable risks that the Trust is obliged to manage. The inability of the boundary to maintain a secure perimeter contravenes the principle of "effective site security measures", which forms a core expectation of KCSIE.

The condition issues also present wider health and safety risks under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. The unstable fence lines and leaning posts pose hazards of collapse onto footpaths or play areas, particularly during high winds. Sharp edges, protruding metalwork, and displaced panels increase risk of physical injury to pupils, staff, and visitors. The overgrown vegetation obstructing visibility at key boundary locations further undermines the Trust's ability to monitor and manage risk effectively, representing a failure to maintain the estate in a manner that supports safe operation.

The site's safeguarding performance is further compromised by non-compliance with Secured by Design (SBD) principles, which set out best practice for perimeter security in educational environments. The reduced height, damaged sections, and ineffective locking mechanisms on gates fall short of SBD recommendations for boundary robustness, access control, and tamper resistance. Although SBD is not statutory, it is widely recognised by CIF assessors and the police as an appropriate benchmark for ensuring a secure and resilient school boundary.

Where vehicular access gates fail to close securely or rely on ad-hoc manual locking arrangements, there is also a risk of breach of the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, which require that access routes be safe, controlled, and fit for purpose. Faulty hinge arrangements and distorted leaves introduce additional hazards during use and prevent the gate from performing its intended safeguarding function.

Taken together, the defects observed place the school at risk of multiple compliance failures. The boundary in its current condition does not provide the safe and secure environment required by statutory guidance, safeguarding expectations, and recognised best-practice security standards. Without intervention, these risks will continue to escalate, potentially leading to safeguarding incidents, legal exposure, and increased scrutiny from regulators or local police.



5.0 Recommendations

Based on the defects identified during inspection, it is recommended that the school undertakes a targeted but comprehensive program of perimeter security refurbishment. The condition and alignment failures observed across substantial sections of the boundary indicate that localised repairs will no longer provide an effective or sustainable solution. The existing fencing has reached the end of its serviceable life in several areas, and deterioration is sufficiently advanced that reinstatement through piecemeal works would fail to address the underlying structural and safeguarding risks.

The boundaries to the north, east and south are currently due to be replaced in August 2026.

The west boundary with the public highway remains to be proposed to be replaced as soon as possible after the above works are complete.

Replacement should incorporate robust powder-coated steel components to ensure long-term durability and reduce maintenance liability. New posts should be set in appropriately sized foundations to prevent future movement and ensure line and level are maintained throughout the lifespan of the installation.

It is important that gates are installed around the perimeter to provide secure access to pupils and teachers. The gates will tie in with the new 2.4m weld mesh fencing and create a fully secure perimeter. All new gate installations should be specified to meet relevant standards for strength, anti-ligature considerations, and compliance with Secured by Design principles.

To improve future resilience and reduce long-term maintenance burdens, the school should adopt a coordinated approach to boundary management. This should include the introduction of a perimeter inspection regime, periodic gate maintenance, proactive vegetation control and an asset register identifying key boundary components and their anticipated refurbishment cycles.

Given the safeguarding concerns arising from unauthorised access risks, pupil absconding potential and structural instability, these works should be implemented as a priority. A comprehensive boundary upgrade will restore statutory compliance, significantly reduce safeguarding and operational risks, and provide a secure environment that supports the safe, effective operation of the school.



6.0 Consequences of Delays

If the recommended perimeter security works are not undertaken, the condition of the fencing and boundary infrastructure will continue to deteriorate, resulting in an increased likelihood of safeguarding incidents and statutory compliance breaches. Several sections of the boundary are already structurally weakened, and further corrosion, movement of posts, and displacement of panels will progressively reduce their ability to resist climbing, tampering, or accidental impact. This will heighten the risk of unauthorised individuals gaining access to the site or pupils exiting the boundary unsupervised, both of which constitute significant safeguarding failures under Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).

Delayed intervention will also lead to escalating health and safety risks. Areas where fence lines are unstable may become prone to partial collapse, particularly during periods of high winds or ground movement. This presents a foreseeable risk of injury to pupils, staff, and visitors using walkways and external recreational areas adjacent to defective fencing. In addition, unaddressed defects such as sharp metalwork, corroded components, and distorted gate leaves may become progressively hazardous as materials continue to degrade.

Operational impacts will intensify over time. The school will face increasing difficulty in managing and supervising external areas, particularly during high-movement periods such as arrival, breaks, and dismissal. Staff will be required to implement additional control measures, including manual monitoring of vulnerable boundary points or temporary closures of affected areas, placing additional strain on resources and reducing the effectiveness of routine supervision. Repeated short-term interventions and reactive repairs will result in inefficient use of maintenance budgets and will not provide a sustainable or compliant solution.

From a compliance perspective, deferring the works leaves the Trust exposed to potential criticism or enforcement from regulatory bodies should a safeguarding incident occur that can be reasonably attributed to known defects. The failure to maintain a secure boundary may also undermine the Trust's ability to demonstrate compliance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, and the obligations set out in KCSIE 2025. Any identified breach may result in reputational impact, increased scrutiny, or enforcement action.

In summary, postponing the works will exacerbate deterioration, heighten safeguarding and safety risks, increase operational disruption, and expose the school and Trust to avoidable statutory non-compliance. Early action is essential to restore boundary security, maintain a safe learning environment, and ensure that foreseeable risks are effectively mitigated.

7.0 Photographs

Photo 1

Location: - West boundary



Remarks: Low level gates and adamaged brickwork to entrance.

Condition/Priority rating: **D1**

Photo 6

Location: - West Boundary



Remarks: Low level gates and adamaged brickwork to entrance.

Condition/Priority rating: **D1**

Photo 3

Location: - West boundary



Remarks: Low level gates and adamaged brickwork to entrance.

Condition/Priority rating: **D1**

Photo 4

Location: - West boundary



Remarks: Low level gates and adamaged brickwork to entrance.

Condition/Priority rating: **D1**

Photo 5

Location: - West boundary



Remarks: Low level fencing adjacent to footpath easily scaled by miscreants – open site boundary.

Condition/Priority rating: **D1**

Photo 6

Location: - West boundary



Remarks: Low level fencing adjacent to footpath easily scaled by miscreants – open site boundary.

Condition/Priority rating: **D1**

Photo 7

Location: - West boundary



Remarks: Low level fencing adjacent to footpath easily scaled by miscreants – open site boundary.

Vegetation along boundary

Condition/Priority rating: **D1**

Photo 8

Location: - West boundary



Remarks: Low level fencing adjacent to footpath easily scaled by miscreants – open site boundary.

Vegetation along boundary

Condition/Priority rating: **D1**