



Mr Graham Vaudrey: Professional conduct panel outcome

**Panel decision and reasons on behalf of the
Secretary of State for Education**

May 2026

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Professional conduct panel decision and recommendations, and decision on behalf of the Secretary of State

Teacher: Mr Graham Vaudrey
TRA reference: 23815
Date of determination: 14 May 2026
Former employer: Ditcham Park School (Hampshire)

Introduction

A professional conduct panel (“the panel”) of the Teaching Regulation Agency (“the TRA”) convened between 11 to 14 May 2026 by way of a virtual hearing, to consider the case of Mr Graham Vaudrey.

The panel members were Jo Palmer-Tweed (teacher panellist – in the chair), Wendy Baxter (teacher panellist) and Tony Coyne (lay panellist).

The legal adviser to the panel was Sarah Price of Blake Morgan LLP solicitors.

The presenting officer for the TRA was Rosa Bennathan of Counsel instructed by Kingsley Napley LLP.

Mr Vaudrey was present and was represented by Aleksandra Manning Rees of Counsel.

The hearing took place in public save that portions of the hearing were heard in private and was recorded.

Allegations

The panel considered the allegations set out in the notice of proceedings dated 25 February 2026 (as amended as part of a preliminary application at the outset of the hearing).

It was alleged that Mr Vaudrey was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute in that whilst working as the Head of Seniors Sport and Physical Education at Ditcham Park School ('the School'):

1. He has not maintained appropriate professional boundaries with pupils, in that he:
 - a) Made inappropriate comments to pupils as set out in Schedule A;
 - b) Touched pupils inappropriately by putting one or more of his hands on pupils' shoulders and/or putting one or more of his hands on the waists of pupils;
 - c) High-fived pupils and/or held their hands for a prolonged period of time;
 - d) Hugged pupils;
 - e) Used inappropriate terms of endearment such as "princess" and/or "darling" and/or "sweetheart" and/or "gorgeous" and/or words to that effect;
 - f) Asked pupils personal questions about their social lives and/or relationships;
 - g) Encouraged pupils to talk to him rather than to attend scheduled lessons; and/or
 - h) Made certain pupils favourites and/or singled them out for attention.
2. On or around 25 January 2023, he made inappropriate comments to Pupil A as set out in Schedule B.
3. His conduct referred to in paragraphs 1(a) – (h), and/or 2 above was sexual and/or sexually motivated.

Schedule A

[REDACTED]

Schedule B

[REDACTED]

Mr Vaudrey admitted allegation 1a, 1b (in part), 1c (in part), 1d, 1e, 1f and 2. He denied allegations 1g, 1h and 3. In relation to the admitted allegations, Mr Vaudrey accepted that his actions amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and disrepute.

Summary of evidence

Documents

In advance of the hearing, the panel received a bundle of documents which included:

Section 1: Chronology and anonymised pupil list – pages 1 to 8

Section 2: Notice of proceedings and response – pages 9 to 18

Section 3: Teaching Regulation Agency witness statements – pages 19 to 35

Section 4: Teaching Regulation Agency documents – pages 36 to 255

The panel also had a copy of the case management hearing decision dated 23 April 2026.

In addition, the panel agreed to accept a separate defence bundle which was submitted on behalf of Mr Vaudrey, consisting of 64 pages.

The panel was provided with a recording of a conversation between Pupil A and Mr Vaudrey (linked to the transcript at exhibit 23). The panel listened to the recording at the start of the hearing on day 1.

The panel members confirmed that they had read all of the documents within the bundle, in advance of the hearing and the additional documents that the panel decided to admit.

In the consideration of this case, the panel had regard to the document Teacher misconduct: Disciplinary procedures for the teaching profession 2020, (the “Procedures”).

Witnesses

The panel heard oral evidence from the following witnesses called by the presenting officer:

- Witness A – [REDACTED]; and
- Witness B – [REDACTED].

Mr Vaudrey also gave oral evidence.

Decision and reasons

The panel announced its decision and reasons as follows:

The panel carefully considered the case before it and reached a decision.

Mr Vaudrey had been employed at Ditcham Park School (“the School”) as a teacher and Head of Seniors Sport & PE. Mr Vaudrey had worked at the School from 1 November 2000 until 26 April 2024.

In November 2023, concerns were first raised about Mr Vaudrey’s conduct.

The next concern was raised on 19 February 2024. Following this, Mr Vaudrey was given a formal warning.

Further concerns were raised on 29 February 2024. Mr Vaudrey was suspended on 5 March 2024.

The School conducted an investigation, during which a number of pupils and staff were interviewed.

A School disciplinary hearing was held on 17 April 2024.

Mr Vaudrey was subsequently referred to the TRA.

Findings of fact

The findings of fact are as follows:

The panel heard oral evidence from Witness A and Witness B on behalf of the TRA.

The panel considered that the evidence of Witness A was inconsistent and she had not been able to provide impartial evidence in these proceedings. Witness A told the panel that at the start of each investigation interview with the pupils no staff names were mentioned, but it was clear on the interview proforma, which had been provided to the panel, that the pupils were being asked about Mr Vaudrey (and this was confirmed by Witness B). When Witness A gave oral evidence to the panel, she accepted that in her witness statement she had stated that *“Pupil Q had said that Graham Vaudrey looked for opportunities to touch girls when he does not need to.”* but that this comment was not recorded in the School’s investigation interview notes for Pupil Q. Another example of an inconsistency in Witness A’s evidence was in her own witness statement where she directly contradicted herself with the number and order of concerns, and also the nature of some of the concerns, that had been raised with her.

Witness B was a credible witness, but was only able to assist the panel to a limited extent, as she was unable to recall details and was not a direct witness.

The panel considered that a significant challenge in this case was that it had not been able to hear directly from the pupils. In particular, the panel did not have the benefit of being able to hear from Pupil A. The pupil's evidence was hearsay. Whilst the panel had a copy of the School's investigation report, the investigation interview notes were not a verbatim record of the conversations with the pupils and staff interviewed.

Mr Vaudrey has admitted a number of the allegations, but the panel has carefully considered these admissions and whether they are consistent with the evidence available to the panel, before reaching a decision on the allegations. Where the panel has found that the evidence does not support an admission or where the panel has reached a conclusion that the behaviour was not inappropriate or a breach of professional boundaries, it has set this out in the reasons below.

The panel found the following particulars of the allegations against you proved, for these reasons:

2. On or around 25 January 2023, you made inappropriate comments to Pupil A as set out in Schedule B.

The panel was provided with an audio recording made by Pupil A of the conversation with Mr Vaudrey on 25 January 2023. The panel was also provided with two versions of a transcript of that recording, one which had been prepared by the School during its investigation (which was an incomplete and inaccurate version) and a second version (which was a complete version) which had been prepared for these proceedings.

The panel did not have the benefit of being able to hear from Pupil A. However, it took account of her witness statement, in which she described how each comment made her feel. Pupil A described the various comments made her feel "*uncomfortable*", "*weird*" and "*odd*".

Mr Vaudrey has admitted making these comments, and accepts that they were inappropriate. Mr Vaudrey stated that Pupil A asked to come and speak to him on 23 January 2023. He stated that initially they were unable to find an empty room, but eventually went to the [REDACTED]. There was another teacher in there at the time, but said she would leave the room so Mr Vaudrey and Pupil A could speak in private. Mr Vaudrey made it clear that the teacher did not have to leave the room. Mr Vaudrey said he was upset and confused to learn that Pupil A had recorded the conversation, particularly as Pupil A continued to come and speak to him.

Mr Vaudrey stated that having listened to the recording, he recognises that the language used and things he said were inappropriate. Mr Vaudrey told the panel that he was devastated that his comments had the opposite effect to what he had intended.

During his oral evidence, Mr Vaudrey stated that he had become “*arrogant in terms of how he saw himself*” and that he thought he could “*solve pupils’ problems*”. He said that he thought that he had the “*magic touch*” with every pupil. However, he now recognises that this was not the case. He said that he knew that his intentions were to boost Pupil A’s self-esteem, but can now see where he went wrong.

The panel was satisfied that each of the comments as set out in Schedule B were made by Mr Vaudrey to Pupil A.

Although Mr Vaudrey has accepted that the comments were inappropriate, the panel took careful account of the evidence and the case as a whole, before determining if each of the comments were inappropriate.

The panel had the benefit of being able to listen to the recording of the conversation between Mr Vaudrey and Pupil A. The panel noted that the tone was professionally appropriate, however Mr Vaudrey’s choice of words was poor on several occasions.

The panel took account of Mr Vaudrey’s explanation that he had attempted to assist Pupil A and boost her self-esteem. The panel considered that the majority of comments were inappropriate. However, the panel did not consider that the following comments were inappropriate:

ii. “Well, I can sit here all fine. I’m looking at you now, I could tell you a thousand things that are good about you.”

iv. “I’d expect you to speak to me at least twice a day.”

vi. “You are kind, you are gorgeous, you are intelligent.”

Whilst the panel was of the view that these were a poor choice of words, they were not inappropriate in the context of the conversation that Mr Vaurdey was having with Pupil A and his intention underpinning the comments.

The panel considered that the remaining comments as set out in Schedule B were inappropriate. The panel accepted that Mr Vaudrey had good intentions, but that his delivery was poor. He had used language that was inappropriate to use towards a young person. The panel was concerned that Mr Vaudrey was giving the wrong message to Pupil A in that he was saying that she will go far in life based on her appearance. Instead, Mr Vaudrey could have focused on talking to Pupil A about getting a good education and qualifications, for example.

The panel therefore found allegation 2 proved.

The panel found the following particulars of the allegations against you not proved, for these reasons:

1. You have not maintained appropriate professional boundaries with pupils, in that you:

a. Made inappropriate comments to pupils as set out in Schedule A;

The panel noted that Mr Vaudrey admitted this allegation. The panel considered the admission alongside the evidence before it. The panel was concerned that the evidence was not consistent with Mr Vaudrey's admission.

The panel reviewed each of the comments as set out in Schedule A, as follows:

i. *"You're so pretty."*

The panel was provided with copies of the handwritten notes that were made by Witness B during the School's investigation. These notes recorded Pupil A's response to the question *"has the staff member ever made comments about your appearance?"*, as *"You're so pretty, gorgeous, beautiful"*.

This comment in the record of interview was not placed in speech marks. However, other phrases used in the same interview, and other comments in Schedule B, were recorded with speech marks which indicated they were a verbatim record. The panel took this to indicate that this particular comment was not a verbatim record. However, this comment appears in the investigation report as a verbatim comment. The panel was not able to test if it was an accurate record of what had been said because Pupil A was not present.

The panel was not satisfied that there was clear evidence that Mr Vaudrey had made this comment.

ii. *"You're a sight for sore eyes."*

Witness A confirmed that Pupil D had reported that during a [REDACTED] in 2024, Mr Vaudrey had made them feel uncomfortable when he commented, *"you are a sight for sore eyes"*. Pupil D reported this to a member of staff who reported this to Witness A. Witness A stated that she spoke to Pupil D about the incident. The panel was provided with a copy of the CPOMS log relating to this incident.

The panel was provided with copies of the handwritten notes that were made by Witness B during the School's investigation. Pupil Y is recorded as stating that Mr Vaudrey said to Pupil D *"you're a sight for sore eyes"*.

Whilst it was hearsay evidence, the panel considered that different pupils had confirmed that Mr Vaudrey had made this comment to Pupil D. Mr Vaudrey had also accepted that he said the comment.

During his evidence, Mr Vaudrey stated that he “*vividly remembers*” giving the pupil a high five and saying that she was a sight for sore eyes. He stated that he thought that the comment meant that if you were having a bad day that “*seeing someone meant that your own sore eyes were better*”. He stated that he now understands the connotations with the phrase and that it wasn’t meant in that way. Mr Vaudrey said that at the time the pupil did not show any discomfort, but he recognises that it may have made her feel uncomfortable.

The panel accepted Mr Vaudrey’s explanation and his understanding of the phrase used at the time. On that basis, on balance, the panel did not consider that it was inappropriate or a breach of professional boundaries, given the context in which it was made.

iii. “*Lots of boys will like you.*”

The panel was provided with copies of the handwritten notes that were made by Witness B during the School’s investigation. The notes were not made verbatim, but in response to the question “*Has the staff member ever made comments about your appearance?*”, Pupil Z was recorded as saying “*A few times. You’re very pretty. Lots of boys will like you.*”

Mr Vaudrey accepted making this comment and that it was inappropriate. However, the panel was not satisfied that there was evidence that Mr Vaudrey had made this comment. There was no witness statement from Pupil Z and the notes made were not a verbatim record of what had been said during the investigation interview. There has been no opportunity to test the evidence of Pupil Z.

For similar reasons, the panel concluded that, on balance, the evidence did not prove the comment was made by Mr Vaudrey.

iv. “*You look good in that top.*”

The panel was not satisfied that there was evidence that Mr Vaudrey had made this comment. The only reference to this comment was in the investigation report, which stated “*It was also reported that GV would make comments such as...“you look good in that top” (reference to a strappy vest top worn on non-uniform day).*” However, there was no information about which pupil had made this comment, and the panel was unable to identify any such comment as recorded in the interview with pupils. The panel was also concerned that there was reference to Mr Vaudrey making comments “*such as*” which indicates to the panel that he may not have said these exact words or phrases.

For these reasons, allegation 1a is not proved.

b. Touched pupils inappropriately by putting one or more of your hands on pupils' shoulders and/or putting one or more of your hands on the waists of pupils;

The panel noted that Mr Vaudrey admitted this allegation in part.

The panel considered the admission alongside the evidence before it. The panel was concerned that the evidence was not consistent with Mr Vaudrey's admission.

Mr Vaudrey had accepted that he touched pupil's shoulders. He stated that this would be following rugby matches, if he was high-fiving a pupil then he would wrap his other arm around their back. He stated that he did not have any specific recollection of touching a pupil's waist, but he might have done so in the context of vaulting lessons when spotting pupils, as he was trained to do.

The panel took account of the other evidence available, which included references in the school's investigation interviews.

Pupil W was recorded as saying "*hands on shoulders – nothing intense*".

Pupil X was recorded as saying that Mr Vaudrey "*puts his hand on my shoulder when I've done something well in rugby*".

On balance, the panel was satisfied that there was evidence that Mr Vaudrey did put his hands on pupils' shoulders. However, the panel was not satisfied that there was evidence to suggest that this was inappropriate. In reaching that decision, the panel took account of Mr Vaudrey's explanations and the situations in which he would put his hand on pupils' shoulders. The panel also noted evidence from other teachers which indicated that there was a culture in the School at the time of teachers behaving in this familial manner with pupils.

The panel noted that Mother G had approached Witness A in November 2023 to raise a concern about Mr Vaudrey putting his hand on a [REDACTED] pupil's waist. The panel was provided with limited information about this concern and there was no direct evidence available in relation to this allegation. Witness A informally spoke to Mr Vaudrey about this incident, whilst he was teaching a lesson in the gym, but no further action was taken. The panel did not have any evidence of Mr Vaudrey being able to reflect and respond to this professional advice.

The panel noted that it had been recorded during the School's investigation that Pupil H described that Mr Vaudrey "*will put his hand on waist to stop you and start a conversation.*" However, this was not a verbatim note of the interview and there was no other corroborating evidence. The panel therefore placed little weight on this evidence.

For these reasons, the panel was not satisfied that the evidence demonstrated that Mr Vaudrey put one or more of his hands on pupils' waists.

Given that the panel did not conclude that Mr Vaudrey put one or more of his hands on shoulders was inappropriate, and there was insufficient evidence that he put one or more of his hands on pupils' waists, on the balance of probabilities, allegation 1b is not proved.

c. High-fived pupils and/or held their hands for a prolonged period of time;

The panel noted that Mr Vaudrey admitted this allegation in part. Whilst he accepted high-fiving pupils, he did not accept holding pupil's hands for a prolonged period of time. In his evidence, Mr Vaudrey stated he would high five pupils, both boys and girls, and it would happen around the School. Mr Vaudrey demonstrated how he high-fived pupils, and the panel considered that this could be better described as a "*clasp*" that one might see during sporting events such as rugby.

There was evidence that Mr Vaudrey high-fived pupils and there were a number of pupils who reported this during the School's investigation.

Witness A told the panel that she witnessed Mr Vaudrey hold pupils' hands after a high five. When questioned on this, Witness A said she witnessed this more than a few times but was unable to say how long the "*extended*" high five lasted. As noted above, the panel did have concerns about the impartiality of Witness A's evidence, so it placed little weight on this evidence.

Whilst some pupils reported the high fives as "*hand holding*" and with a "*tight grip*", the panel had not been able to test this evidence. It was a non-verbatim record made during the interviews and there was a lack of clarity around what would have been a "*prolonged*" period of time. In particular, there had been no explanation from any witness as to how long the alleged "*hand holding*" or "*extended high fives*" lasted.

Taking account of the evidence as a whole, and Mr Vaudrey's explanation, the panel concluded, on balance, that Mr Vaudrey did not hold pupils' hands for a prolonged period of time.

In regards to high-fiving pupils, the panel was satisfied that this did not breach professional boundaries. The evidence suggested that Mr Vaudrey was known to high five pupils across the School and there was no indication that this conduct was inappropriate.

Allegation 1c is not proved.

d. Hugged pupils;

Mr Vaudrey admitted this allegation. The panel considered the admission alongside the evidence before it.

In his evidence, Mr Vaudrey recalled four instances in his career when he had hugged pupils, other than at the year 11 prom. These instances involved occasions where pupils, some of them were in the primary phase, had come up to him and hugged him. It typically happened when pupils were in distress. Mr Vaudrey also described how he would high five pupils and do an “*arm wrap*” over the shoulder. This took place at the end of sporting fixtures.

The panel took account of the pupil interviews from the School’s investigation. A number of pupils had referred to Mr Vaudrey hugging pupils.

The panel noted that in the summary of staff interviews, it was noted that one member of staff stated “*all of us give hugs to comfort*”.

The panel was satisfied that Mr Vaudrey did hug pupils. However, given the evidence that other staff hugged pupils in similar circumstances, i.e. to comfort pupils, and the familial environment in the School, the panel did not find that Mr Vaudrey had breached professional boundaries.

Therefore, allegation 1d is not proved.

e. Used inappropriate terms of endearment such as “princess” and/or “darling” and/or “sweetheart” and/or “gorgeous” and/or words to that effect;

Mr Vaudrey admitted this allegation. The panel considered the admission alongside the evidence before it.

In his evidence, Mr Vaudrey said he used these “*throw away*” terms and did not have any “*sinister intent*”. He stated that he would say these to everyone, and they would “*slip out*”. He gave an example of calling one of the pupils “*princess*”.

The panel was satisfied that the other evidence demonstrated that Mr Vaudrey did use the terms of endearment as set out.

The panel went on to consider whether the terms were inappropriate. The panel noted that during the School’s investigation, one member of staff, when asked if they had heard Mr Vaudrey call pupils by anything other than their names stated “*yes – we all do*”.

The panel accepted Mr Vaudrey’s explanation that such terms slipped out. In the panel’s view it is not uncommon for teachers to use these sorts of terms, particularly if unable to

remember a pupil's name. Taking in to consideration the culture in the School and the way in which the terms were used by Mr Vaudrey, the panel concluded that the terms were not inappropriate and therefore not a breach of professional boundaries.

For these reasons, allegation 1e is not proved.

f. Asked pupils personal questions about their social lives and/or relationships;

Mr Vaudrey admitted this allegation. The panel considered the admission alongside the evidence before it.

In his evidence, Mr Vaudrey said that he would ask pupils about their weekend and answered questions from them about the same. He stated that looking back, having known some of these pupils for more than 10 years, and in line with the School's motto of '*where every child is known and valued*' he took this quite literally.

The panel was satisfied that there was other evidence that demonstrated that Mr Vaudrey asked pupil's questions about their personal lives. However, this was limited in nature. Further, in his role as head of year and a previous interim head of pastoral, the panel considered that Mr Vaudrey would have been used to, or indeed required to, deal with such issues. The panel did not consider that there was evidence that suggested the extent of these questions blurred professional boundaries.

Therefore, allegation 1f is not proved.

g. Encouraged pupils to talk to you rather than to attend scheduled lessons;

This allegation was denied by Mr Vaudrey. In his evidence he stated that he has never encouraged a pupil to miss a scheduled lesson. He has accepted pupils who have been excused from their scheduled lesson by their teacher, to help in a PE lesson. Mr Vaudrey stated that this would also happen in reverse.

The panel considered the record of interview with Pupil H in which it was recorded that Mr Vaudrey said "*do you really want to go to English or would you like to stay and chat with me all afternoon?*". The panel considered that this was hearsay evidence that had not been tested. There was no other corroborating evidence. Therefore, the panel placed little weight on it.

The panel was not satisfied that the TRA had proved on the balance of probabilities that Mr Vaudrey had encouraged pupils to talk to him rather than attend scheduled lessons. Mr Vaudrey had provided a credible explanation of what he might have said on occasion and that was the accepted practice in the School.

Therefore, allegation 1g is not proved.

h. Made certain pupils favourites and/or singled them out for attention.

This allegation was strongly denied by Mr Vaudrey. He stated that he believed that he treated all pupils equally. He said that he invariably spent more time with some pupils and knew others better due to the curriculum, his pastoral role, extra curricular activities and social relationships outside of school with families. Mr Vaudrey told the panel that if you asked them, he believed every child would think that they were his favourite.

The panel noted that some pupils spoken to during the School's investigation did say that Pupil A was singled out by Mr Vaudrey. However, the panel did not consider that the evidence demonstrated that Mr Vaudrey had favourite pupils and/or singled them out for attention. In relation to Pupil A, there was evidence that Mr Vaudrey had a different relationship [REDACTED]. The panel considered that other pupils may have interpreted Pupil A as a favourite of Mr Vaudrey for this reason.

Allegation 1h is not proved.

3. Your conduct referred to in paragraphs 1(a) – (h), and/or 2 above was sexual and/or sexually motivated.

The panel considered this allegation in respect of allegation 2 only, as it had found the conduct at allegation 1 not proved.

The panel noted that allegation 2 concerned Pupil A. The panel did not have the benefit of being able to hear directly from Pupil A. The panel noted that whilst Pupil A had stated in her witness statement that the comments that Mr Vaudrey had made during the meeting on 25 January 2023 made her feel "uncomfortable", "weird" and "odd", she did not appear to interpret the messages as sexual.

Mr Vaudrey denied that his conduct was sexual or sexually motivated. He told the panel that the comments were to "*help boost Pupil A's self-esteem and encourage her to keep things in perspective*".

The panel considered that whilst the comments made by Mr Vaudrey were inappropriate, it did not consider that they were sexual in nature. The panel had the advantage of being able to listen to the recording, and concluded that it was professionally appropriate in tone. The panel considered that there were plausible explanations for many of Mr Vaudrey's actions, which would indicate that his actions were not sexually motivated. For example, some of the comments were about Pupil A's appearance and the panel accepted that Mr Vaudrey had good intentions and was seeking to boost Pupil A's self-esteem. Further, the panel noted that the meeting between Mr Vaudrey and Pupil A had taken place during the school day, on school premises and in sight of other members of staff.

The panel considered that there was no evidence that Mr Vaudrey was seeking sexual gratification or a future sexual relationship with Pupil A.

The panel concluded that Mr Vaudrey's actions were not sexual nor sexually motivated.

Therefore, allegation 3 was not proved.

Findings as to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute

Having found allegation 2 proved, the panel went on to consider whether the facts of allegation 2 amounted to unacceptable professional conduct and/or conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

In doing so, the panel had regard to the document Teacher misconduct: The prohibition of teachers, which is referred to as "the Advice".

The panel first considered whether the conduct of Mr Vaudrey, in relation to the facts found proved, involved breaches of the Teachers' Standards.

The panel considered that, by reference to Part 2, Mr Vaudrey was in breach of the following standards:

Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by

- treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position

The panel also considered whether Mr Vaudrey's conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences listed on pages 12 and 13 of the Advice.

The Advice indicates that where behaviours associated with such an offence exist, a panel is likely to conclude that an individual's conduct would amount to unacceptable professional conduct. The panel found that none of these offences was relevant.

The panel considered that policies, procedures and training in the School in relation to maintaining professional relationships were not always available and where they were, they were not clear. There was evidence that there was a relaxed, familial culture across the School with both pupils and parents. This, the panel considered, was a significant factor in Mr Vaudrey's informal approach. Since Mr Vaudrey had only worked in this school he had no other professional guidance with which to compare the policies and practices of the School.

When Mr Vaudrey was first approached in relation to his conduct in November 2023, this was done in an informal manner, during a lesson, and it was not clear what professional guidance he was given at that time. As such, the panel was of the view that there was insufficient evidence to suggest that Mr Vaudrey had ignored any previous guidance or warning in relation to alleged conduct.

For these reasons, the panel was not satisfied that the conduct of Mr Vaudrey amounted to misconduct of a serious nature which fell significantly short of the standards expected of the profession.

Accordingly, the panel was not satisfied that Mr Vaudrey was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct.

In relation to whether Mr Vaudrey's actions amounted to conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, the panel took into account the way the teaching profession is viewed by others. It considered the influence that teachers may have on pupils, parents and others in the community. The panel also took account of the uniquely influential role that teachers can hold in pupils' lives and the fact that pupils must be able to view teachers as role models in the way that they behave.

In considering the issue of disrepute, the panel also considered whether Mr Vaudrey's conduct displayed behaviours associated with any of the offences in the list that begins on page 12 of the Advice. As set out above in the panel's findings as to whether Mr Vaudrey was guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, the Panel found that none of these offences were relevant.

The panel considered that Mr Vaudrey had used inappropriate language during the conversation with Pupil A. The panel considered that whilst the findings of misconduct were not serious, the conduct displayed would be likely to have a negative impact on the individual's status as a teacher. The comments made demonstrated an inappropriately informal approach and was giving the wrong message to Pupil A as it concentrated almost exclusively on her appearance and how that would be an advantage in the future.

For these reasons, the panel found that Mr Vaudrey's actions constituted conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute.

Panel's recommendation to the Secretary of State

Given the panel's findings in respect of conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute, it was necessary for the panel to go on to consider whether it would be appropriate to recommend the imposition of a prohibition order by the Secretary of State.

In considering whether to recommend to the Secretary of State that a prohibition order should be made, the panel had to consider whether it would be an appropriate and

proportionate measure, and whether it would be in the public interest to do so. Prohibition orders should not be given in order to be punitive, or to show that blame has been apportioned, although they are likely to have punitive effect.

The panel had regard to the particular public interest considerations set out in the Advice and, having done so, found a number of them to be relevant in this case.

There was a public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, given the finding that Mr Vaudrey had communicated inappropriately with a pupil. Although, the panel considered that this related more to the wellbeing of pupils, rather than a safeguarding concern.

Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Vaudrey were not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession.

The panel was of the view that a strong public interest consideration in declaring proper standards of conduct in the profession was also present as the conduct found against Mr Vaudrey was outside that which could reasonably be tolerated.

In addition to the public interest considerations set out above, the panel went on to consider whether there was a public interest in retaining Mr Vaudrey in the profession.

The panel decided that there was a public interest consideration in retaining Mr Vaudrey in the profession, since no doubt had been cast upon his abilities as an educator and he is able to make a positive contribution to the profession.

In view of the clear public interest considerations that were present, the panel considered carefully whether or not it would be proportionate to impose a prohibition order, taking into account the effect that this would have on Mr Vaudrey.

The panel took further account of the Advice, which suggests that a prohibition order may be appropriate if certain behaviours of a teacher have been proved. In the list of such behaviours, those that were relevant in this case were:

- serious departure from the personal and professional conduct elements of the Teachers' Standards;
- misconduct seriously affecting the education and/or safeguarding and well-being of pupils, and particularly where there is a continuing risk (the panel considered that this was only relevant to the extent that it affected a pupil's wellbeing and there was not a continuing risk).

Even though some of the behaviour found proved in this case indicated that a prohibition order would be appropriate, the panel went on to consider the mitigating factors.

Mitigating factors may indicate that a prohibition order would not be appropriate or proportionate.

The panel considered that Mr Vaudrey's actions were deliberate and that there was no evidence to suggest that he was acting under extreme duress. The panel considered that the culture within the School and the lack of guidance played a significant part in his informal approach.

Mr Vaudrey did have a previous good history and there was evidence that he had positively contributed to the education sector. Mr Vaudrey had worked at the School for over 20 years and the panel saw evidence that he had gone beyond what was expected of him in terms of extra curricular activities.

The panel was provided with seven positive testimonials from colleagues, pupils and parents attesting to Mr Vaudrey's character and abilities as an educator. These referees were aware of the allegations and Mr Vaudrey's response to them. Some examples of the positive comments include the following:

Individual A, [REDACTED], stated *"he was one of a few staff members I trusted implicitly and felt safe with... Graham was the pinnacle of professionalism."*

Individual B, [REDACTED] stated, *"I have no doubt about Graham's professional integrity or his suitability to teach."*

Individual C, [REDACTED], wrote *"Graham's strong interpersonal skills make him an invaluable member of any team; he can support or ask for help to facilitate the best possible outcome in any situation. His positive attitude, reliability and appropriate conduct are a significant asset. For this reason, it has been a privilege to have him accompany me on [REDACTED] for Year 5 pupils over the past 20 years."*

Individual D, [REDACTED] stated *"As a professional, I found Graham to be a talented and committed educator who consistently prioritized his pupils' well-being. He maintained sound classroom management and held high expectations for behaviour, both within his form groups and his PE lessons."*

The panel found that Mr Vaudrey had demonstrated significant insight and remorse. He has recognised the impact of his conduct on the pupil involved. Mr Vaudrey stated *"I now recognise that I failed to meet this standard in this conversation with Pupil A. I never intended to make her feel uncomfortable and am deeply sorry for this."*

Mr Vaudrey has fully engaged with the TRA and these proceedings. He admitted the allegation found proven against him, and that his behaviour amounted to disrepute.

The panel was provided with a written reflection prepared by Mr Vaudrey, which reflected on his conduct and a three-day professional boundaries course that he had undertaken.

In relation to the Teachers' Standards, Mr Vaudrey stated *"I am committed to ensuring that if I am permitted to continue to teach in the future that all future actions fully align with these standards."*

Mr Vaudrey also stated: *"Looking back with the benefit of hindsight I can see that, having spent my entire teaching career at Ditcham Park and spent 24 years there, I became too settled, comfortable and relaxed and lost sight of the fundamental standards and principles expected of me as a teacher."*

In his reflection, Mr Vaudrey stated *"I am full of regret and remorse that any of my actions have made pupils feel uncomfortable or worse. Such conduct goes completely against why I became a teacher in the first place."*

Having demonstrated insight and remorse, the panel was satisfied that there is extremely limited risk of repetition of the proven conduct.

The panel first considered whether it would be proportionate to conclude this case with no recommendation of prohibition, considering whether the publication of the findings made by the panel would be sufficient.

The panel was of the view that, applying the standard of the ordinary intelligent citizen, the recommendation of no prohibition order would be both a proportionate and an appropriate response.

Given that the nature and severity of the behaviour were at the less serious end of the possible spectrum and, having considered the mitigating factors that were present, the panel determined that a recommendation for a prohibition order would not be appropriate in this case.

The panel considered that the publication of the adverse findings it had made was sufficient to send an appropriate message to Mr Vaudrey as to the standards of behaviour that are not acceptable, and the publication would meet the public interest requirement of declaring proper standards of the profession.

Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State

I have given very careful consideration to this case and to the recommendation of the panel in respect of sanction.

In considering this case, I have also given very careful attention to the Advice that the Secretary of State has published concerning the prohibition of teachers.

In this case, the panel has found allegation 2 proven and found that those proven facts amount to conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute. The panel has found the

remaining allegations not proven. I have therefore put those matters entirely from my mind.

The panel has recommended that the findings of conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute should be published and that such an action is proportionate and in the public interest.

In particular, the panel has found that Mr Graham Vaudrey is in breach of the following standards:

Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by

- treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position

The findings of misconduct are serious as they include a finding of inappropriate language during the conversation with Pupil A which *"...was giving the wrong message to Pupil A as it concentrated almost exclusively on her appearance and how that would be an advantage in the future."*

I have to determine whether the imposition of a prohibition order is proportionate and in the public interest. In considering that for this case, I have considered the overall aim of a prohibition order which is to protect pupils and to maintain public confidence in the profession. I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order in this case would achieve that aim taking into account the impact that it will have on the individual teacher. I have also asked myself, whether a less intrusive measure, such as the published finding of conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute, would itself be sufficient to achieve the overall aim. I have to consider whether the consequences of such a publication are themselves sufficient. I have considered therefore whether or not prohibiting Mr Vaudrey, and the impact that will have on the teacher, is proportionate and in the public interest.

In this case, I have considered the extent to which a prohibition order would safeguard pupils. The panel has observed, *"There was a public interest consideration in respect of the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils, given the finding that Mr Vaudrey had communicated inappropriately with a pupil. Although, the panel considered that this related more to the wellbeing of pupils, rather than a safeguarding concern."* A prohibition order would therefore prevent such a risk from being present in the future.

I have also taken into account the panel's comments on insight and remorse, which the panel sets out as follows, *"The panel found that Mr Vaudrey had demonstrated significant*

insight and remorse. He has recognised the impact of his conduct on the pupil involved." I have therefore given this element considerable weight in reaching my decision.

I have gone on to consider the extent to which a prohibition order would maintain public confidence in the profession. The panel observe, *"Similarly, the panel considered that public confidence in the profession could be seriously weakened if conduct such as that found against Mr Vaudrey were not treated with the utmost seriousness when regulating the conduct of the profession."* I am particularly mindful of the finding of making inappropriate comments to a pupil which focus on their appearance in this case and the impact that such a finding has on the reputation of the profession.

I have had to consider that the public has a high expectation of professional standards of all teachers and that the public might regard a failure to impose a prohibition order as a failure to uphold those high standards. In weighing these considerations, I have had to consider the matter from the point of view of an "ordinary intelligent and well-informed citizen."

I have considered whether the publication of a finding of conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute, in the absence of a prohibition order, can itself be regarded by such a person as being a proportionate response to the misconduct that has been found proven in this case.

I have also considered the impact of a prohibition order on Mr Vaudrey himself. The panel comment *"Mr Vaudrey did have a previous good history and there was evidence that he had positively contributed to the education sector. Mr Vaudrey had worked at the School for over 20 years and the panel saw evidence that he had gone beyond what was expected of him in terms of extra curricular activities.*

The panel was provided with seven positive testimonials from colleagues, pupils and parents attesting to Mr Vaudrey's character and abilities as an educator."

A prohibition order would prevent Mr Vaudrey from teaching. A prohibition order would also clearly deprive the public of his contribution to the profession for the period that it is in force.

In this case, I have placed considerable weight on the panel's comments concerning Mr Vaurdey's insight and remorse. The panel has said, *"Having demonstrated insight and remorse, the panel was satisfied that there is extremely limited risk of repetition of the proven conduct."*

For these reasons, I have concluded that a prohibition order is not proportionate or in the public interest. I consider that the publication of the findings made would be sufficient to send an appropriate message to the teacher as to the standards of behaviour that were

not acceptable and that the publication would meet the public interest requirement of declaring proper standards of the profession.

S. Blomfield

Decision maker: Stuart Blomfield

Date: 15 May 2026

This decision is taken by the decision maker named above on behalf of the Secretary of State.