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30 September 2016

Mr Selwyn Calvin  
Headteacher  
Barr's Hill School and Community College  
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West Midlands  
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Dear Mr Calvin

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Barr's Hill School and Community College**

Following my visit to your school on 19 September 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in March 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with a range of people to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. These included meetings with you, other senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers, pastoral and support staff, pupils from each key stage, governors, and the chief executive officer of The Futures Trust (the multi-academy trust of which the school is a member). Joint learning walks with you and with the deputy headteacher were undertaken to observe teaching, learning and behaviour. The school improvement and action plans were evaluated. Evidence about the monitoring of teaching and learning and of performance management was examined. A summary of the school's data on 2016 key stage 4 outcomes, and school information on attendance and behaviour, were reviewed.

## **Context**

Since the section 5 inspection that judged the school to require improvement, the following changes to staffing have taken place: an acting assistant headteacher has left the school; the head of physical education and performing arts, and the lead teacher for science, both left the school and have been replaced; 11 full-time teachers and two part-time teachers left the school and have been replaced with qualified teachers.

## **Main findings**

You and your staff are addressing all areas identified as requiring improvement at the recent section 5 inspection. Plans for this are suitable and well thought through.

All staff have received updated safeguarding training and the tracking of this is now tighter. Policies have been updated in line with statutory requirements. Safer recruitment and other safeguarding issues are now being developed across the multi-academy trust to ensure a more consistent and collaborative approach that facilitates rigorous quality assurance and review. A new reception area has been built that requires sixth form students to sign in and out, and systems enable relevant staff to make appropriate checks on the whereabouts of sixth form students.

Expectations about pupils' behaviour, their dress, their preparedness for lessons and how they treat each other have been raised as a result of new policies. For example, mobile phones are not allowed in school, and pupils must come to lessons prepared, with a dictionary, their planner and a full pencil case. As part of these higher expectations, lateness is now dealt with by immediate sanctions. According to pupils and leaders, staff are enforcing these changes fully and consistently. Teachers, pupils and leaders all value these changes because they have reduced low-level disruption and improved the quality of learning in lessons. Some pupils say that not being able to use their mobile phones during school hours is a relief. Pupils rate these changes highly because there are fewer distractions in lessons. They say school is 'a nice environment to be in now and everyone wants to work'. They say that because teachers are now very consistent in their expectations and there is little disruption in lessons, they can 'focus more and achieve'.

Learning walks with you and your deputy indicated that pupils were engaged and attentive, and ready and willing to learn. Work in books was neat and well presented and there was evidence of effective marking and feedback leading to pupils improving their work.

Monitoring of teaching and learning is improving because there is better integration between pastoral and academic monitoring. Non-teaching heads of year monitor behaviour and attitudes, and heads of subject departments and senior leaders

monitor the quality of teaching and learning. This process is informed by improved assessment information about pupils' outcomes. In turn the information gained from monitoring informs the professional development programme for teachers and is leading to more rigorous performance management.

Improved information about the achievement and attendance of different groups of pupils is now available. This, together with regular meetings to review pupils' performance, contributes to stronger leadership and management at whole-school and subject level. It helps leaders to identify pupils who may be falling behind more quickly and to determine, and put in place quickly, effective interventions to support them.

Headline measures from summer 2016 indicate strong improvement over a range of areas. Where weaknesses continue to exist, leaders are aware of them and have plans in place to tackle them.

A timely review of pupil premium funding has taken place. Recommendations are suitable and the school has taken appropriate actions in the light of these recommendations. It is too early to evaluate the impact of these actions but early indications, for example in relation to the outcomes of Year 11 disadvantaged pupils in summer 2016, are positive.

A review of governance by The Futures Trust took place soon after the previous inspection. This resulted in changes to the chair and other members of the governing body and in how it operates. These changes are having a positive impact on the quality of the governing body's work with the school and how well its members hold leaders to account. An external review of governance is planned for the end of the autumn term. This is timed so that once these initial changes have settled, their impact can be more usefully evaluated.

### **External support**

The school is receiving excellent support from President Kennedy School (an outstanding school and the other secondary school in The Futures Trust). This involves collaborative professional development, for example with individual subject departments from each school working closely together to share good practice. A key focus of this collaborative work is developing a new curriculum at key stage 3 and improving the approach to, and accuracy of, assessment at key stage 3. In addition, senior leaders and lead teachers from President Kennedy School are being deployed to support and add leadership capacity to Barr's Hill School and Community College.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer of The Futures Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Coventry. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Gwen Coates  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**