

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



24 July 2017

Andrew Dawson
Hunters Hill College
Spirehouse Lane
Blackwell
Bromsgrove
Worcestershire
B60 1QD

Dear Mr Dawson

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hunters Hill College

Following my visit to your school on 17 July 2017, 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 May 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 recent section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that all pupils, particularly the most able, achieve well by:
 - improving the quality of teaching so it is consistently of a high standard
 - ensuring that all staff use the information that is available to them to plan activities that challenge pupils to make rapid progress
 - extending the curriculum offer in key stage 4 so pupils are consistently studying qualifications at the appropriate level
- improve attendance, particularly for pupils in key stage 4
- develop leadership capacity so middle leaders are driving improvements in their areas of responsibility and new systems become embedded.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher and other leaders to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body, and a representative of the Birmingham Education Partnership (BEP). The school's action plans were evaluated and I analysed information about pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and safety. I observed pupils arriving at the start of the day and short visits were made to classrooms with you and the deputy headteacher.

I examined the school's self-evaluation document and published information on the school's website. Minutes of meetings of the governing body and a recent report on the school's progress produced by BEP were also considered.

Context

Since the previous inspection there have been considerable changes to the leadership structure of the school. The deputy headteacher and an assistant headteacher left in July 2016 and a new deputy headteacher joined in September 2016. Two assistant headteachers joined in April 2017 and a current assistant headteacher will leave the school at the end of this school year. The headteacher will retire in August 2017 and the deputy headteacher will become acting headteacher and an assistant headteacher will become acting deputy headteacher for two terms.

Three teachers, one higher-level teaching assistant and one instructor have left since the last inspection and three teachers have joined the school. One teacher will leave in August 2017 and five teaching assistants will join the school in September 2017.

Main findings

You and the deputy headteacher have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. You are both using your knowledge of the school to take effective action to address the areas requiring improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection.

Plans that are in place to improve the school have been updated over time so they clearly focus on the school's priorities. Timings of specific actions are realistic and logical and they match the issues raised in the previous inspection report. Consequently, sufficiently robust actions are taking place.

Leadership and management are improving. Senior leaders are working well together to tackle areas that require improvement and middle leadership is developing. However, many leaders are relatively new and some middle leaders are not yet consistently driving improvements in their areas of responsibility. Additionally, revised processes are not fully embedded, so many actions have only had a partial impact on

outcomes.

Governance continues to improve. Governors now receive accurate and well-analysed information from a range of sources that gives them a clear understanding of how the school is performing. They use their skills, knowledge and understanding to provide a suitable level of support and challenge to school leaders. When they are assessing the quality of leaders' work, governors have a clear focus on the impact actions are having on the school.

Leaders have introduced a new system for collecting information about pupils. As a result, they are able to analyse the progress that pupils make and to see patterns in behaviour and attendance more clearly. They are also able to use this information to take considered actions to improve aspects of the school's work.

Leaders are beginning to use the information that is now available to them to challenge and support each other over the impact of required actions. They are also using it to hold staff to closer account. However, this system has not yet been fully developed. Consequently, some staff do not use the information that they have to plan activities to help all pupils make rapid progress from their starting points.

Leaders now analyse information about child protection, the use of physical intervention, attendance and behaviour more closely so they are able to identify patterns and trends. Although leaders are beginning to use this information to inform actions, the process is not yet fully developed, so it is yet to have a marked impact on improving the school.

The monitoring, communication and promotion of better attendance has been enhanced since the last inspection. Action has been taken to address all the areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection and some individuals have much-improved attendance. However, overall attendance is similar to that recorded at the time of the last inspection and absence is still too high in Years 10 and 11.

The start of the school day is calm, orderly and well managed. Members of staff, with clear responsibilities, are outside each morning as transport arrives on the school site. They ensure pupils' safe entry to school and take messages from drivers about any non-attendance. Routines at the start of the day have improved considerably since the last inspection.

There are clear systems for contacting parents quickly once it is known that a pupil has not arrived at school. Staff routinely let parents know about absence and establish the reasons for non-attendance. Absence is pursued more persistently and staff work closely with families and other agencies, where necessary, to help pupils to attend well. The work of the attendance clerk, who joined the school after the last inspection, has had a marked impact on improving the rigour with which absence is followed up.

There is a much more high-profile and consistent approach to promoting high

attendance for all pupils, including those who attend regularly. Rewards are in place for good and improved attendance, there are frequent updates on the school's newsletters and a healthy rivalry between 'homes' and forms is developing about having the best attendance.

All pupils now receive their entitlement to full-time education and absence is always coded accurately. Attendance patterns and trends are analysed closely so that actions can be carefully focused to maximise impact. However, further work is planned as absence is still too high, particularly in key stage 4.

Teaching, learning and assessment are beginning to improve but inconsistencies remain. Middle leaders have been given opportunities to build relationships with teachers in other special and mainstream schools and see a variety of practice. They share their learning with other staff but, as many staff have not seen teaching outside of the school, this is not yet helping to secure consistently strong teaching.

Fewer staff are teaching outside of their subject specialisms and support is in place, through regular meetings and better information, to help all staff in every subject area. As the school moves to specialist teams teaching individual subjects, plans are in place to ensure that no one is teaching outside of their specialism from September 2017.

The accuracy of teachers' assessments is checked in school and work in mathematics has been externally moderated. However, external moderation of English has not taken place. Plans are in place to externally check the accuracy of assessment in English but the moderation of work in other subjects is limited.

All pupils from Year 11 moved onto appropriate and sustained destinations, such as college courses, training and apprenticeships, in 2016. Current pupils all have meaningful destinations in place. However, the most able pupils do not always start post-16 courses at a high level as they are not routinely challenged to make rapid progress or take qualifications that allow them to achieve higher levels of attainment. The curriculum has been extended and a wider range of appropriate courses are now in place but the full impact of this will not be evident until the summer of 2018.

External support

The Birmingham Education Partnership is providing effective support to the school in order to help it to improve. The link officer knows the school well and offers advice and challenge to leaders to help to improve the quality of education provided.

The school has received regular visits from officers from BEP. The rapid recovery plan and the reviews commissioned by the partnership have helped leaders to improve the quality of teaching in the school. Leaders and governors value the input provided by BEP.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools

commissioner and the director of children's services for Birmingham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Simon Mosley
Her Majesty's Inspector