

Barclay School September 2017 Ofsted Monitoring Visit Summary

Overall

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures. The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose. The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose. The school may appoint newly qualified teachers.

Inspectors discussed the impact of actions taken to address the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. In evaluating the school's progress, inspectors observed pupils in tutorials, a morning assembly and 21 lessons, or parts of lessons, some jointly with members of the senior leadership team. They also met with groups of middle leaders, pastoral leaders, teachers, support staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors held meetings with all year groups, except for Year 11, who were out of school on work experience. During their observations of teaching and learning, inspectors spoke with pupils about their work. They also spoke with pupils as they moved around the school between lessons and at break and lunchtimes.

1)The effectiveness of leadership and management

You and other senior leaders have now established a clear framework of improvement to begin steering the school on its journey out of special measures.

Pupils', as yet unvalidated, GCSE English and mathematics examination outcomes in summer 2017 are much better than early predictions suggested. They are also much better than the 4 outcomes seen in previous years. This is as a result of the swift action taken by new senior leaders and subject teams. It is notable too that aspects of the outcomes for students in the sixth form are also showing some early signs of improvement.

You and other senior leaders have secured a plan for improvement that is crystal clear. High expectations of the performance of staff and pupils are a central feature of day-to-day life in school. It is undeniable that, together with other senior leaders, you have done a sterling job in winning the hearts and minds of the whole school team.

Senior leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and learning are regular and accurate in identifying what teachers are doing well and what they need to do to improve. You have also prioritised the development of a new whole-school assessment mode

Inspectors' evidence confirmed that governors are fulfilling an important role in challenging and holding you to account for pupils' progress

You and other senior leaders are strengthening links with external partners. For example, in hosting placements for trainee teachers in subjects where you are confident that there is effective support available within your departments. The school is also working with a local university teacher training provider to develop and test out a 'preparing to teach' programme. This is focused on training teaching assistants who are aspiring to become qualified teachers in English, mathematics and science.

2)Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The leadership team has a clear plan for improving the quality of teaching and learning, across subjects and for all pupils. There are early signs that the quality of teaching is beginning to improve.

Assessment: the school's new and simplified assessment model is based on recent changes to the GCSE grading system. The assessment information gathered is focused on giving teachers a better understanding of pupils' in-year progress

SEN: Early plans for change aim to improve the way information about pupils' needs is shared with subject teachers across the school.

3) Personal development, behaviour and welfare

You and your senior leaders have rightly raised the expectations of pupils' behaviour across the school. The revised behaviour policy is very clear about the implications of unacceptable conduct. It is also right that the policy gives high priority to celebrating the positive behaviour exhibited by the majority of pupils in the school.

The day-to-day school environment is typically calm and orderly. There is a high staff presence at the start and end of the day and at break and lunchtimes

Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school and there is always someone to go to if they have a problem. School records show that when the few incidences of unacceptable behaviour arise, senior staff take swift action and ensure parents are kept informed.

Pupils are polite and generally respond well to adults in school. They told inspectors that they felt behaviour has improved since the previous inspection. Working relationships between staff and pupils are typically positive and mutually respectful.

Inspectors noted strong pastoral support for pupils across the school, including counselling and support for concerns related to mental health issues.

4) Outcomes for pupils

There are early signs that pupils are beginning to make better progress. The unvalidated GCSE examination outcomes, in summer 2017, suggest that pupils' attainment in English and mathematics has improved significantly from the previous year.

With a focus on continuous improvement, extra support with reading and writing is planned for Year 7 pupils who joined the school with below-average literacy skills. This work is underway but it is at an early stage of implementation.

In the sixth form, students are making better progress and more of them are achieving the highest grades. Disadvantaged students' progress has improved across all A-level routes and, in particular, across applied general courses.