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Miss Pyatt  
Headteacher  
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Lawrence Road  
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Gloucestershire  
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Dear Miss Pyatt

### **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Barnwood Park Arts College**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when Sally Hall and I inspected your college on 15 March 2011, for the time Mrs Rock gave to our phone discussions and for the information which she provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my particular thanks to students with whom we held discussions.

You were not in the college during the day before this inspection and during most of the day of the inspection. Since the last inspection, 14 teachers have left the college and seven new teaching staff have been appointed. There are currently four vacancies on the governing body.

As a result of the inspection on 25 November 2009, the college was asked to address the most important areas for improvement, which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the college has made inadequate progress in making improvements and inadequate progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

The examination results attained by Year 11 students in 2010 were broadly similar to those attained by students in 2009. The rate of improvement in the percentage of students attaining five or more A\* to C GCSE grades, the GCSE point score per student and attainment in English and mathematics were only slightly above the national figure. As a result, all these attainment indicators remained significantly below the national average. There was a more positive picture in terms of the percentage of students attaining five or more A\* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics. This measure rose faster than that seen nationally and the



proportion of students attaining these grades was broadly average. Published contextual value added data indicate there was no improvement in the progress made by Year 11 students in 2010 compared with the previous year. The progress made by these students between Years 7 and 11 was significantly below the national average. This was particularly true for low- and middle-attaining students

All the teaching observed during this inspection was at least satisfactory and some was good. However, the overall quality of teaching and the progress made by students in lessons has not improved since the previous inspection. The positive aspects of teaching reported during the last inspection remain. For example, there is a positive climate for learning in lessons, students behave well and relationships between staff and students are strong. Teachers have good subject knowledge and provide students with clear, helpful explanations. However, the use of prior attainment information by teachers to ensure that lesson tasks provide all students with a sufficient level of challenge has not improved and remains an issue for the college to address. The pace of learning in some lessons is too slow because teachers either talk for too long or provide too much time for students to complete tasks. Teaching is now monitored more regularly by senior and middle leaders. However, the effectiveness of this monitoring is limited as there is inconsistency in the accuracy of judgments being reached across the college, with some being over-generous. There has been some improvement to the sharing of good teaching practice through links with a local partnership school and through work being led by the arts faculty. However, strategies to share the good teaching practice in the college remain underdeveloped.

As a result of improved reporting procedures, students are now more aware of their targets and how well they are doing. However, the targets set for students are not sufficiently challenging and therefore their impact on raising aspirations is limited. Some good marking was observed during this inspection that gave clear and helpful advice to students about how to improve their work. However, the monitoring of marking is not sufficiently robust to ensure that this good practice is consistently in place across the college. A central system to track the progress of students towards their targets is in place and teachers' assessments are beginning to become more accurate. However, senior leaders identified that there is still some unreliability in the quality of these assessments. Those students at the GCSE grade C/D boundary or those who are underachieving are quickly identified and provided with support. This is beginning to have an impact on the progress made by students, particularly those at the grade C/D boundary in English and mathematics.

Senior staff know the college's strengths and weaknesses. The school improvement plan addresses areas of weakness and identifies some sensible actions to be taken. However, the plan does not clearly link these actions to specific measurable success criteria against which the effectiveness of these actions can be evaluated. The actions taken by the leaders have not led to improvements being made quickly enough or being consistently well embedded across the college. For example, significant variation in achievement between subjects still remains, with the higher



performing subjects being the college's specialist arts subjects and mathematics while the weaker performing subjects being English, design and technology and history.

Support for the college from the school improvement partner and partnership school has helped to improve the college's assessment, tracking and interventions procedures. However, support for improving the quality of teaching in the college has been less effective.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Peter Sanderson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November 2009**

- Within the next year, increase the rate of progress for all learners, and especially those of average ability, by:
  - using assessment information about individual students more effectively to plan lessons that meet the needs of all learners
  - making sure that students know clearly what they need to do in order to improve their work and move from one level to the next
  - improving the leadership and management of teaching and learning so that the college has a more accurate picture of the quality of lessons, taking robust and effective action to address areas of weaker performance in teaching, and encouraging the sharing of good practice that already exists within the college.