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12 Apr 2011

Mr I D Fenn
Headteacher
Burnage Media Arts College
Burnage Lane
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Dear Mr Fenn,

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Burnage Media Arts College

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I and an additional inspector, Keith Worrall, inspected your school on 12 April 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Could you please also pass on my thanks to the Chair of the Governing Body and the students who kindly gave up their time during the monitoring inspection.

In September 2010 the school moved into a new building and the school sports field is now nearing completion.

As a result of the inspection on 3 and 4 March 2010, the school 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 school has made satisfactory progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

There has been a rising trend of attainment since 2008 and the school provided robust evidence during the visit to show that improvements have been sustained. A substantial proportion of students in Year 11 have already gained A* - C grades in English and mathematics and are now in the process of working to improve their grades, or preparing for further qualifications. Improvements in leadership and teaching are having a marked impact on students' learning and progress in English. This expertise has been harnessed effectively to improve other areas of the curriculum, such as mathematics, where outcomes for students are improving rapidly. In many lessons observed during the visit, progress made by students was better than at the previous inspection. It was best in English, mathematics and some other subjects, largely as a result of effective planning clearly linked to students' abilities and the criteria for assessment. The performance of all groups of students is similar.

January 2011



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

There are discernible improvements in teaching as a result of the school's efforts to raise the profile of the use of assessment strategies to support learning. In many lessons, students know their targets and have a clear idea of what they need to do to improve. For example, in a mathematics lesson observed during the inspection, students were encouraged to link their work to assessment criteria and clear advice was given as to what they would need to do in order to improve their grades in forthcoming examinations. However, some inconsistencies in practice remain. Some lessons, particularly in science, are not sufficiently matched to the needs and abilities of students. The school's own monitoring reports reveal there is still inconsistency in the quality of teaching and lesson planning.

The deployment of resources is variable. The school is now thriving in the new building, which provides a stimulating and welcoming environment, with excellent facilities to promote learning. Information and communication technology are now used more productively as a tool for teaching. Most teachers appreciate the new environment and improved facilities are used highly effectively for the most part. Improvements are less evident in science where, in lessons seen during the visit, there were few opportunities provided for students to apply their learning in practical situations. The school has put in place training for all teaching assistants and trains teaching staff in how to deploy such support effectively. However, in some lessons seen during the inspection, opportunities were missed to use teaching assistants more productively.

The specialist status of media arts contributes well to the school. The specialism has a high profile and is used increasingly effectively to expand students' cultural awareness and raise aspirations. For example, during the inspection, all Year 9 students watched a drama production which encouraged them to consider their possibilities for the next stages in their education.

The senior leadership team now has an established track record in securing improved outcomes for students. Senior leaders have tackled robustly areas for development by sharing existing good practice and establishing clearer lines of accountability. Self-evaluation is highly accurate. The school has identified developmental priorities and procedures are now in place to effect such improvements as are necessary, especially in promoting greater consistency and ensuring that the positive progress seen in some parts of the school is replicated elsewhere. The school benefits from a supportive governing body led by a capable and knowledgeable Chair. Senior leaders, the local authority and the School Improvement Partner work effectively to ensure that the school is moving in the right direction. This monitoring inspection included a check on the school's safeguarding procedures and found them to be secure and meeting requirements.

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

Mrs Joan Davis
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the previous inspection which took place in March 2010 were:

- Further increase the proportion of teaching that is good or better to raise attainment and improve progress by:
 - the consistent use of effective assessment strategies
 - ensuring that activities in lessons, and the deployment of resources, are well matched to the individual needs of students.