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Mr C Currie  
Headteacher  
Brighton Hill Community School  
Brighton Way  
Basingstoke  
RG22 4HS

Dear Mr Currie

### **Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Brighton Hill Community College**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 16 January 2013 and for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass on my particular thanks to the members of the interim executive board (IEB) and the students who came to meet me.

Since the last inspection there has been a significant turnover of teaching and support staff. The senior leadership team has been restructured to ensure line management responsibilities help direct and drive improvement activities through the different faculties and subjects.

As a result of the inspection on May 2012, 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 is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the students' achievement.

The GCSE examination results for 2012 indicate that students' attainment was below the national average overall. However, there are indications of an improving trend in students' attainment, especially in GCSE mathematics where attainment has improved over three years to be above average. More students gained GCSE A\* to G grades, increasing the percentage to above the national average. Based on the school's analysis of assessment information, and work seen during lessons, indications are that increasing numbers of students are making at least expected progress since the time of the inspection, especially in English, mathematics and the sciences. Disabled students and those with special educational needs are making better progress as are those in receipt of additional government funding (known as the Pupil Premium). Students' attendance levels are average and most students

generally have positive attitudes to learning. During most lessons and around the school students behave sensibly. In a small minority of lessons, some low-level disruption and loss of concentration occur when teaching is uninteresting or slow to motivate students' learning.

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, but it is not yet consistent within or across departments. Some common positive characteristics in many lessons include lesson planning formats, clear learning objectives and a better use of student assessment information when preparing activities. Where teaching is the most effective, teachers create an atmosphere which is positive and enjoyable. Activities are accurately based on students' previous learning and information about their past achievements. Students respond well to skilful questioning and the guidance provided. The very best lessons enable students to develop skills which help them become less reliant on the teachers' direction and reflect on their previous learning. This was seen to great effect in a Year 10 dance lesson: students discussed how to improve their performances with each other and the teacher provided challenge and demonstrated high expectations of quality movement by using some good examples on a DVD. Other examples of high expectations and challenge were seen in a science lesson where students researched the origins and meaning of the Big Bang theory. Teachers are beginning to develop students' literacy skills in different subjects by challenging misspellings and encouraging note-taking and better grammar. There are some good examples of regular and informative marking. Consequently, more students are aware of their targets and what they need to do to achieve them.

In the diminishing number of less effective lessons, teachers do not provide students with activities that meet their needs and abilities. Work is not always marked regularly and does not provide constructive information for students about how to improve. Lessons can be insufficiently practical and fail to capture students' interest. This was confirmed by a group of students during a discussion where they all agreed that they learned more when lessons were practical and relevant. In some of the lessons, teachers direct the students' pace of learning throughout the lesson, which means that those of all abilities progress at the same rate. This hinders more-able students and maintains their reliance on the teacher's provision of resources and information. When this happens, progress slows and a small number of students become either passive or restless; either way becoming disengaged from their learning.

The headteacher and his capable senior leadership team have faced considerable challenges since the last inspection. Nonetheless, they have remained steadfast in their commitment and dedication to improve the school. This can be seen in their more thorough checking of the quality of teaching and analysis of students' progress and attainment. The use of student assessment information by teachers in their lesson planning is routinely and robustly encouraged. Effective training, tighter performance management targets and the sharing of good practice are contributing to the better teaching and the roles of middle managers. As a result, an increasing

number of faculty and subject leaders are involved more in the monitoring of lessons and checking the progress of students. Consequently, more leaders and managers at all levels are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what they need to do to make further improvements. Plans for improvement address the areas highlighted in the report and progress has been made in tackling them. The time lines for checking the progress of the actions are not sufficiently detailed to ensure that progress against all actions can be measured accurately. The experienced IEB is very clear about what the school needs to do to improve and provides very effective challenge to senior leaders.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose. The actions and support it has taken since the inspection are meeting the needs of the school. These have included regular visits from the leadership and learning partner and a variety of subject inspectors. The local authority's robust intervention to put in place the IEB has ensured the school is well placed to continue to make improvements. The school's progress is regularly reported on and monitored by senior officers and members of the county council.

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

John Seal  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in May 2012.**

- Accelerate students' progress so that more make good progress and achievement rises by:
  - ensuring the quality of learning is consistently good or better in all subjects, and particularly in mathematics and science
  - giving students greater opportunities to develop, apply and reinforce their skills in reading, writing, communication and numeracy across the curriculum.
  
- Further improve the quality and consistency of teaching, increasing the proportion of good and outstanding lessons and eradicating remaining inadequate teaching, by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of what students can achieve
  - involving all students in active learning through the use of a wider range of teaching approaches and strategies to inspire and engage them
  - sharing best practice more widely
  - making sure that marking is of consistently high quality so that students know how to take the next steps to improve.
  
- Build on the recent improvements in leadership and management at all levels by:
  - developing a more consistent approach to whole-school assessment strategies to improve achievement over time
  - ensuring that precise timescales are set for all improvement initiatives
  - evaluating all actions and strategies more accurately in terms of their impact on improving outcomes for all students.