

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



29 February 2016

Ms Sylvia Thomas  
Interim Executive Principal  
The Baverstock Academy  
501 Bells Lane  
Druids Heath  
Birmingham  
B14 5TL

Dear Ms Thomas

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of The Baverstock Academy**

Following my visit with Sir Robin Bosher, Her Majesty's Inspector and National Director, and Steven Cartlidge, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 9–10 February 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in September 2014. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is not taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

I strongly recommend that the school does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers (NQTs).

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Interim Academy Board, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Birmingham.

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in September 2014**

- Improve the quality of teaching, particularly in mathematics and science, so that the progress and attainment of all groups of students, especially disadvantaged students and those with special educational needs, improves rapidly by:
  - ensuring that teachers receive good training and support to set appropriately challenging targets for students and to assess accurately their progress in lessons and over time
  - ensuring that the long-term assessment information and the ongoing assessments from lessons are used continually to plan and teach lessons at the right level for different groups of students
  - making sure that teachers mark books frequently enough and in a way that informs students about their successes and the next steps they need to take
  - consistently and effectively challenging low-level disruption so that the focus is on learning in all lessons
  - ensuring that the curriculum in the LEAP provision closely mirrors that in the mainstream part of the academy so that students do not fall behind with their preparation for examinations at the end of Year 11.
  
- Improve leadership and management so that all actions drive improvement in students' achievement by:
  - establishing a clear basis on which to set challenging targets for all students to enable them to make good progress
  - ensuring that leaders and managers at all levels frequently and rigorously analyse the progress that all groups of students are making in all subjects, including in Years 7 and 8, identify where and why there is underachievement and take carefully planned actions to put this right
  - implementing a rigorous system to evaluate the quality of teaching throughout the academy, using information about students' progress as well as observations and scrutinise of students' work, and putting in place appropriate strategies to improve teaching where this is needed
  - analysing more thoroughly other information gathered in the academy, such as attendance and behaviour data, and using this to target actions in a more focused way
  - minimising the use of part-time timetables for LEAP students in line with government guidance and ensuring that correct exclusion procedures are followed if it is necessary for a student to be removed from the academy site for disciplinary reasons
  - reviewing the frequency with which BIC students integrate into the main academy

- ensuring that governors receive clear, analytical reports on students' progress and behaviour and the quality of teaching so they can be more effective in challenging and supporting the academy.

An external review of governance and an external review of the academy's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

## **Report on the fourth monitoring inspection on 9–10 February 2016**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and the school's website and met with leaders and staff, groups of pupils and the Chair of the Interim Academy Board. Inspectors spoke to the district leader of the Birmingham Education Partnership by telephone. Inspectors observed parts of 16 lessons, including in mathematics and science, 14 of which were observed jointly with a member of the senior leadership team. Inspectors reviewed the school's arrangements for safeguarding, English as an additional language and special educational needs.

### **Context**

The Principal was absent during the inspection visit. Since the last monitoring visit the Interim Executive Principal was appointed from December 2015. An interim academy board was established in January 2016 to replace the governing body. The senior deputy headteacher has left the school. The heads of department for history and geography have left and have not been replaced because of the imposed financial notice to improve. A former head of religious education has retired. New senior leadership line management arrangements have been put in place for English, mathematics, science, English as an additional language and special educational needs. During the inspection visit leaders announced that the sixth form is to be suspended once the current Year 12 have completed their courses.

The school's provision for pupils at risk from exclusion, entitled 'Learn, Engage, Achieve, Progress' (LEAP) has now been taken into the mainstream of the school, as has its provision for newly arrived pupils learning English as an additional language, formerly known as Baverstock in the City (BIC).

### **Outcomes for pupils**

Standards are set to fall further at GCSE in 2016. Recent mock examinations for Year 11 in all subjects were carried out in December 2015. These were marked and moderated under examination conditions. Projections from these results indicate that the proportion of pupils set to achieve five good grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, is likely to be low compared to national averages in 2015. Leaders are overcautious for this year's results in the light of last year's predictions, which proved to be inaccurately high.

Pupils' individual targets have not been revised to take account of their current performance. For example, the mathematics action plan still has a projected target of 68% A\* to C grades for 2016 although in the recent mock examination only 13% of pupils achieved these grades.

Many pupils spoken to said they have previously been set target grades which they did not think they would achieve. A large number spoken to said they were projected to achieve A and A\* grades at GCSE. Their current standards of work in mathematics and science suggest that these targets set are overambitious.

Analysis of the most recent GCSE 2015 results and current outcomes by different groups of pupils indicates widening gaps at GCSE for disadvantaged pupils, speakers of English as an additional language, disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and boys.

Pupils' progress, including in Years 7 and 8, is hampered where work has been pitched at the middle ability range; as a result some pupils find the work too easy or difficult. Work in pupils' books indicates that pupils have not been set appropriately challenging work in order to improve. Pupils spoken to reported a number of lessons where they cannot make progress because teachers are unable to control the class, including in Years 7 and 8.

Evidence from the school's monitoring suggests that while pupil progress has improved it is still well below national expectations. For the previous Year 11 cohort the percentage of pupils making expected and more than expected progress in English and mathematics was below average for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils.

In mathematics the school is providing challenge for its most-able pupils through regular booster sessions led by a specialist mathematician aimed at pupils achieving A and A\* grades. This small group is set to achieve high grades in mathematics.

In work seen in English, mathematics and science there are examples in each subject of individual classes where challenging work is set and is leading currently to some pupils making rapid progress. However, it is not consistent enough across the departments.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

The quality of teaching and learning over time remains highly variable. Recent outcomes and evidence from current outcomes indicate that too much teaching over time remains inadequate. Pupils and groups of pupils have not made enough progress. In lessons seen the teachers have mixed success in their ability to control classes. There are also a number of short-term cover teachers, which leads to lack of continuity in teaching. Too often lessons are planned and pitched at the same level for all pupils without taking account of pupils' various starting points.

Teachers have not received sufficient support and guidance to teach pupils learning English as an additional language, particularly those pupils at the early stage of English who were previously taught off-site in the BIC provision. Consequently, some

of these pupils are set work that is too easy for them as they are not always placed in the most appropriate set. In English classes where new arrivals at the early stage of learning English sit next to each other, pupils do not hear models of spoken English from their peers who are seated elsewhere in the classroom. However, in mathematics pupils were using their home language effectively to support each other's learning. There are developing opportunities for teachers to receive training across the Birmingham education partnership although this is very new.

Teaching still does not sufficiently plan for the needs of pupils who have special educational needs or disability. Pupils are identified on class profiles but lessons are not sufficiently planned or adapted to give them access to the learning at an appropriate level. Consequently, these pupils are not making enough progress.

Marking remains highly variable, including in mathematics and science. Feedback linked to overambitious projected target grades does not give pupils a clear enough picture of how to improve. Pupils are insufficiently aware of grade criteria at GCSE so do not know how to reach the next grade other than by 'working harder' or 'revising more'. As one pupil said, 'I have been predicted A\* grades in all my subjects but apart from mathematics I have no idea how I'm going to get them.' Teachers and pupils do not have a shared understanding of the school's assessment procedures.

Some teachers are unable to manage behaviour in the classroom, which leads to low-level and at times more serious disruption to learning. The behaviour policy is not applied consistently. The deployment of temporary cover teachers, as a result of the financial notice to improve, means pupils do not always have a stable environment for learning in a number of classes.

Now that LEAP is being disestablished pupils are integrated into mainstream classes to ensure they have access to a full range of subjects. Many teachers have developed effective strategies to manage pupil behaviour and have integrated pupils into lessons successfully.

Leaders have identified where teaching is strong but as yet this good practice has not been shared more widely throughout the school.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

Behaviour in lessons is closely linked to the quality of teaching and the extent to which teachers successfully manage behaviour. Pupils are not sure of the behaviour policy and teachers have different responses to and tolerance of incidents of low-level disruptive behaviour.

For the first time in many years there have been some exclusions as leaders are now setting a zero tolerance attitude towards misbehaviour. Consequently the school has excluded a small number of pupils to crack down on serious incidents committed. In

many lessons pupils formerly taught in LEAP have settled well and teachers have been skilled in managing their behaviour.

Pupils reported a significant improvement in the ethos of the school coinciding with the appointment of the Interim Executive Principal. They said that she is 'very hands on' and gets involved with their issues and concerns. Pupils are keen to learn and reported that they want their leaders to deal further with disruptive pupils and those teachers they say are unable to control classes.

Pupils show a high level of interest and curiosity in lessons and ask teachers searching and challenging questions. Some who are quiet and unassuming sit passively and at times go unnoticed by those teachers who only respond to pupils with their hands up or those who call out answers.

All pupils spoken to say they feel safe and well looked after in the school and that incidents of bullying are very rare. Assemblies are used well to promote pupils' personal safety. The extent to which form time is used effectively is variable. Pupils in Year 7 have had the chance to consider and discuss internet safety, but elsewhere, including in Year 11, planners are not routinely checked by tutors for homework or communications from parents.

Previously attendance has been above the national average and persistent absence had fallen. The school's figures indicate that the current level of attendance has fallen this academic year however.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

The Interim Executive Principal is already having an impact in the short time she has been in post. Pupils have noticed an improvement in behaviour and a higher profile of senior leaders around the building, especially at breaktimes. All senior leaders now have clearly defined roles for which they are accountable and are fully supportive of the changes being implemented.

Action has been taken to overhaul the system for evaluating the quality of teaching. It has been adapted to ensure that senior leaders' monitoring of teaching is accurate and focuses on learning and outcomes for pupils. This is at an early stage of development, as is arrangement for the performance management of teachers. Leaders of subjects, including mathematics and science, are not yet fully involved in monitoring teaching or the progress of different groups of pupils in their subject areas. Work to evaluate pupil progress through reviewing their work is also in its infancy.

The school faces severe financial restraints placed on it as a result of the financial notice to improve. As a result, leaders are constrained from offering new contracts when teachers leave and have to rely instead on temporary cover teachers.

Leaders have taken effective action to move LEAP into the mainstream in order to ensure pupils now have access to a full timetable. The timely closure of the BIC building means that learners of English as an additional language are taught in classes in main building with other pupils.

The interim academy board is very new and so has not had time to demonstrate any impact. It has met just once so far. Board members made the very recent decision to suspend the sixth form for funding reasons once Year 12 complete their courses. They are under no illusion about the weaknesses in outcomes and teaching that need to be addressed. They bring a wealth of educational expertise and experience to the school but are too small in number to carry out all their required duties.

Leaders are following safeguarding procedures effectively. However, the newly established interim academy board is not yet fulfilling its role to hold leaders to account for meeting the school's statutory duties for safeguarding and special educational needs.

Leaders have taken positive steps to seek external support within Birmingham and further afield. Baverstock Academy has now re-engaged with the south Birmingham family of schools, which has led to staff receiving wider training and support from good and outstanding schools.

There remain significant weaknesses in the provision for special educational needs, where pupils are not making enough progress. Leadership for English as an additional language is underdeveloped, which means that staff have been insufficiently trained to meet these learners' needs. There are gaps in leadership in some foundation subjects where the school is constrained financially from recruiting replacements.

Not enough action has been taken to address previously identified weaknesses in teaching. The school has been slow to respond to revising targets for pupils on its flightpath assessments where pupils have fallen behind the progress they were expected to make.

The school does not use pupil premium funding effectively enough. There has not been sufficient evaluation of its impact on the progress of these pupils. Attainment gaps for disadvantaged pupils widened in the most recent external examinations. The interim academy board is not sufficiently informed about how the pupil premium is spent and its impact.

Leaders are providing well for most able pupils in mathematics.



The school's website is not easy to navigate, so parents are unable to access essential information.

### **External support**

The school is now receiving support from local schools for teaching and training as it has re-engaged with the Birmingham Education Partnership. This has led to shared training and opportunities for teachers to look at a good practice in other settings although this is at a very early stage of development.