

Barr's Hill School and Community College

Radford Road, Coventry CV1 4BU

Inspection dates	8–9 March 2016
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' progress is slowed by low-level disruption, especially in lessons which are not taught by pupils' usual teachers.
- Apart from in English and mathematics, little is known about how well pupils are achieving overall at Key Stage 3 because teachers' assessments are inaccurate.
- Weak science teaching leads to pupils making poor progress at Key Stage 4. Pupils who speak English as an additional language do not have enough support to help them to understand scientific terms and processes.
- Work set by teachers is sometimes too easy, but more often it is too hard, especially for pupils who rely on additional support. Weak readers are not supported effectively when reading complex text.
- Behaviour is not managed consistently by all teachers. Some teachers' expectations for the standards of uniform and conduct are too low.

- Pupils show little pride in their work, which is often poorly presented. This is not helped by pupils who arrive at lessons badly prepared, without a pen or other basic equipment for learning.
- Many learners in the sixth form do not make the progress they should.
- Leaders, including governors, are not able to see any impact for pupils who are entitled to additional support, especially at Key Stage 3, because teachers' assessments of pupils' progress are not accurate.
- Leaders' views on the quality of teaching are inflated. They do not take sufficient account of the slow progress made by pupils or the impact of poor behaviour management on learning.
- School leaders know some of the strengths and weaknesses of the school well, but some of the most important weaknesses have gone unnoticed, such as making sure that records related to keeping children safe are fully updated.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils at Key Stage 4 make good progress in English and progress is improving in mathematics.
- Teacher assessments at Key Stage 4 are accurate because pupils' work is checked in the school and validated by other leaders in the trust.
- Pupils who are taught in small groups benefit from good teaching.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported overall and achieve at least as well as other pupils in the school.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs well, including learners in the sixth form, with a range of pathways and experiences provided for them, including citizenship and religious education.



Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, and therefore improve the progress made by all pupils, including learners in the sixth form, by making sure that all teachers:
 - tackle low-level disruption so that all lessons allow pupils to learn and to make better progress
 - set work which is at the right level of difficulty for pupils based on what teachers know about the starting points of their pupils so that it is neither too easy nor too hard
 - take into account the reading and comprehension skills of their pupils in planning and designing resources so that pupils are not put off by having to read too much text
 - explain the meaning of subject key terms and specialist language, especially in science, for pupils who
 are at the early stages of learning English, so that these pupils are more able to tackle activities set
 - ask questions of the most-able pupils which require them to infer, interpret and analyse to develop
 the skills they need to attain the higher levels or grades.
- Further improve behaviour through teachers consistently:
 - having high expectations of the standards for uniform
 - using the school's behaviour policy in a firm and fair way so that pupils learn what behaviours are not acceptable
 - making sure that all pupils are equipped properly for lessons, including with a pen to write, a pencil
 for diagrams and a ruler for drawing lines, so that they can present work which is of a high standard.
- Make sure that subject leaders are able to review the work of their area and hold people to account more effectively through:
 - carrying out checks to confirm the accuracy of teachers' assessments at Key Stage 3
 - using accurate information on pupils' achievements to see if their interventions are making any difference, such as through the Year 7 catch-up funding and pupil premium funding, especially at Key Stage 3
 - using information on pupils' progress to inform the judgements they make on the quality of teaching.

External reviews of governance, and of the school's use of the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding, should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and governance may be improved further.



Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

requires improvement

- Following the very recent conversion to an academy and joining the multi-academy trust, The Futures Trust, the school is reviewing its work to align systems and procedures more closely to that of the partner school.
- Senior leadership has been restructured. New and existing leaders started their new roles in September. As a result, many new systems have been introduced and, in some cases, it is too early to see the impact of this work.
- School leaders know some of the existing strengths and weaknesses of the school well and already have plans in place to remedy many of the weaknesses. However, some of the most important areas for improvement have gone unnoticed.
- Gaps were seen in some staff records of pre-employment checks on the single central record, which records staff recruitment and vetting procedures. However, leaders took immediate action to remedy these administrative errors when it was brought to their attention.
- Teachers have received child protection and safeguarding training and leaders have asked them to make sure they know the procedures outlined in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (part one). However, leaders do not have accurate records to confirm that this has been done. Teachers know how to refer concerns to the designated safeguarding officer in the school, but may not all know how to make a direct referral to Children's Social Care, or when they must make a direct referral to the police. Immediate action was taken to address this weakness during the inspection.
- 'Prevent' training has been delivered to all staff, and pupils have been taught how to keep themselves safe from the threats of extremism and radicalisation, although not all pupils have a good enough understanding of this area.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school is poor for a minority of pupils who show a lack of respect for each other and for visitors, including temporary teachers. Senior leaders have high expectations for good conduct but these standards are not upheld consistently by all leaders and teachers.
- Leaders use information gathered from observations of teaching to 'tailor' programmes of support and professional development for teachers. However, leaders do not take into account evidence of progress or the impact of low-level disruption in making their judgements about the impact of teaching on learning. Leaders' views on the quality of teaching are therefore inflated.
- Teachers' assessments at Key Stage 4 are accurate because there is a process of internal moderation and external validation involving specialist leaders of education (SLE) organised through the trust. However, teachers' assessments at Key Stage 3 are inaccurate and leaders are unable to use this information reliably to identify groups that may be underachieving across the curriculum or to see if pupil premium funding and Year 7 catch-up funding is making any difference for pupils.
- Punctuality at the start of the day, and to lessons, is improving and this is monitored carefully by leaders. The newly introduced policy on monitoring lateness, including to lessons, is still being embedded and not all pupils fully accept the need to get to lessons on time or to attend detentions when they are given for lateness. Some pupils told inspectors that if they don't bother going to 'late detentions', no further action is taken to make sure detentions are served.
- Leaders' monitoring of attendance has recently become much sharper and leaders know which groups of pupils require additional support to help them to improve their attendance. Attendance contracts, drawn up with parents, are helping pupils to work towards their attendance targets; pupils with previously very low attendance have improved since their referral to an attendance panel meeting.
- Leaders' reviews of the curriculum and their actions taken to improve provision ensure all pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum based on a range of alternative 'pathways'. The curriculum prepares pupils well for the sixth form, college, training or employment.
- Careers education is well planned from Year 7 and opportunities to learn about fundamental British values, citizenship and religious education are planned in a coherent way for all pupils at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in a range of extra-curricular activities provided for them, mainly related to sport, and revision programmes for most subjects at Key Stage 4.
- Social, moral, spiritual and cultural opportunities are carefully recorded by leaders who aim for every pupil to experience at least one visit each year to the theatre, museum or art gallery for example, through the Barr's Hill Experience programme.



■ A culture of safeguarding, in which parents are encouraged to understand their responsibilities, is supported through parents' workshops on themes such as child sexual exploitation and e-safety. Parents greatly appreciated a recent session on how to support their child in study at Key Stage 4 and preparation for GCSE examinations, which was attended by over 100 parents.

■ The governance of the school

- Following the recent transition to an academy, governance is under review, with further restructuring
 planned to ensure governance operates in the same way across the trust. Since the academy opened,
 there has been just one meeting of the full governing body so it is too soon to see any evidence of
 governors' work in improving the school.
- Governors do not know enough about the progress of pupils in Key Stage 3 and know little about sixth
 form achievements, including success with GCSE resits in English and mathematics. They do not know
 if the Year 7 catch-up funding is making any difference to the literacy and numeracy skills of pupils
 who are entitled to support through this funding. This is because governors are not given this
 information.
- Although the curriculum prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain, this is not explained through
 the school website, which provides parents with very little information on the opportunities available
 for their child.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are now effective, following prompt action taken by leaders to address administrative errors and weaknesses identified in safeguarding procedures.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because behaviour is not well managed in some lessons and low-level disruption hinders pupils' progress.
- Teachers do not all consistently apply the school's behaviour policy and this affects learning. For example, in lessons where pupils were allowed to have their mobile phones on their desk, they were distracted by messages they received during the lesson. However, the behaviour policy clearly states that pupils must not use a mobile phone without permission and that if they do, this should result in a warning.
- Planning of work sometimes does not take sufficient account of pupils' weak reading and poor comprehension skills. Tasks set sometimes have too much text for pupils to read which puts them off attempting the work.
- Checks on learning are sometimes imprecise or inaccurate and teachers move pupils on too quickly before they have grasped earlier work, as was seen in mathematics.
- Teachers sometimes plan different activities for different ability groups in a class, which teachers choose to colour code red, yellow or green. Pupils make good progress when they are directed to a particular task by the teacher rather than being left to choose for themselves, which sometimes means they choose work that is too easy.
- Teachers' high expectations and insistence on work being set out properly lead to pupils' work being of high quality. In contrast, in other lessons, pupils' diagrams were sometimes scruffy and inaccurate, often drawn in pen. Inspectors saw graffiti on books and in pupils' work, reflecting a lack of pride in their work. Pupils sometimes do not have access to appropriate equipment and they are told to use the edge of a book as a straight edge to draw a line, for example.
- Teaching pupils in small groups who are at the early stages of learning English is highly effective, as was seen in English and mathematics and some other subjects. In these lessons, teachers focus on language development and skilfully explain key words and subject terminology, using examples to explain the meaning of these words. Pupils are less well supported in larger classes, such as in science where teachers assume pupils know what words mean.
- In the sixth form, teachers' skilful questioning in film studies and psychology leads to learners being encouraged to think more deeply about their work. When pupils are challenged to infer, interpret or analyse, this supports their development of skills which will enable them to secure higher grades. Teachers' questioning is less effective in other year groups.



Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- A small group of pupils show a disregard for their own personal safety and welfare. Pupils know where they can go to smoke on the school site and say that this is not often challenged by teachers. A similarly small group abscond from the school site at lunchtime to buy food from a local fast-food outlet. Some pupils who do this even take orders from other pupils and buy food for them. These pupils do not have a good enough understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy.
- Although pupils are taught about the threats posed by extremism and radicalisation, some do not have a good enough understanding of how to keep themselves safe from these threats, such as when using the internet, or who to tell and what to do if they experience these threats.
- Pupils who are at the early stages of learning English and those with speech and language difficulties are well supported through the school's specialised unit. The coordinator of pupils with special educational needs knows the pupils' needs well and the help they receive in small groups is effective.
- Pupils have a good understanding of racism, cultural differences and an awareness of different lifestyles because these themes are covered through teaching in other subjects, such as languages and business studies, in addition to citizenship.
- Citizenship and religious education are given a high priority in the school throughout Key Stages 3 and 4, so that all pupils have a good awareness of other faiths and cultures, an acknowledgement of differences and know what it means to be British.
- Pupils have a number of opportunities to take part in trips and visits to further develop aspects of their social, moral, spiritual and cultural experiences. For example, Year 9 pupils took part in a visit to the National Holocaust Centre and Museum in Nottinghamshire during the inspection, and two sixth form learners were about to embark on a visit to Auschwitz in Poland.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement because they are not all being taught well enough how to improve their behaviour. Teachers are inconsistent in the way they apply the school's behaviour policy, and some teachers' expectations for the standards of uniform are too low.
- Off-task behaviours are seen where teachers' expectations of behaviour are not high enough, particularly when lessons are covered by temporary teachers. Sometimes, pupils are not challenged when they wander around the room, talk with friends, shout across the room to others or shout over the teacher, lean back on their chairs or play with pens, rulers or mobile phones.
- Litter and waste food was evident around the site because some teachers do not do enough to stop pupils who eat food in the corridors, on the stairs or around the school site from dropping litter.
- The conduct of a very small number of pupils around the school site is unacceptable. These pupils use bad language or swear at other pupils, are rude and sometimes abusive towards other adults. Internal 'isolation' is used to help these pupils to manage their behaviour and also for reintegration following exclusion. Detailed logs are kept of the use of this sanction, but it is too early to see if this is making any long-term difference to improving behaviour and reducing the high number of exclusions in the predecessor school.
- Attendance overall is indicated to be in line with that seen nationally and leaders are starting to see the impact of their work in improving the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs or disability. Attendance is rising for pupils with an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational need, which has addressed a weakness of the predecessor school where this was very low.
- Pupils value the rewards and incentives they are now given to help them to improve their attendance, ranging from cookies to bigger prizes, such as tablet computers or a bike. They enjoy the competition to see which form 'tops the attendance charts' when this is announced in assembly each week.
- Alarm clocks are given to pupils to help them to get up in time for school, and teachers record the number of minutes late for lessons so that form teachers and pastoral leaders can check for improvements. Parents are kept informed of their child's lateness via text messages.



Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Outcomes require improvement because leaders do not have accurate information on pupils' achievements at Key Stage 3 to be able to check on their overall progress across the curriculum.
- Teachers' assessments, including some of those used for baseline purposes, are not accurate for pupils at Key Stage 3, apart from in English and mathematics.
- Key Stage 4 pupils are given priority for intervention or booster work to help them to catch up where they have been identified as underachieving, especially in English and mathematics. Little has been done to support all pupils in all subjects, especially those at Key Stage 3, at the first sign of their progress slowing. Although this is changing, and teachers understand their responsibility to identify gaps in learning and to intervene to reteach these topics, there is little sign of this making any difference.
- Achievement in science was a key weakness of the predecessor school. Information provided by school leaders suggests this weakness has not yet been addressed and underachievement is set to continue for some pupils. This is because teachers do not support pupils well enough in understanding scientific terms and processes, including pupils with weak literacy skills or those who are at the early stages of learning English.
- Disadvantaged pupils attain less well and make less progress than other pupils in the school and other pupils nationally in English and mathematics. Gaps in achievement seen in the predecessor school were wide but indications for attainment in English and mathematics suggest these gaps are set to narrow for pupils in Year 11.
- Leaders take immediate action to identify pupils' starting points and then to place them on a suitable pathway when they start in the school. Baseline assessments are carried out quickly for all pupils, many of whom arrive with no assessment information from their previous school and, in some cases, have been out of education for some time. A new approach to baseline testing using standardised tests is currently being planned.
- In English, pupils in Year 11 continue to achieve well compared with national expectations, building on the 2015 strengths of the predecessor school. In 2015, a higher proportion of pupils than seen nationally made expected progress, and almost 40% made better than expected progress, which is well above the national average. Based on information provided by school leaders, this strength is set to continue.
- Mathematics was less strong in the predecessor school and in 2015 a smaller proportion than nationally made the progress they should, based on their starting points. Information provided by school leaders indicates that progress in mathematics has improved and Year 11 pupils are now on track to make progress which is at least in line with the national average.
- Pupils who join the school in Year 7 make steady progress each year in English and mathematics and typically go on to make progress which is well above that seen nationally. Pupils who start in Year 9 or later tend to make less progress over their time in the school because some have been out of education for a while and need to catch up with work they have missed in the past.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well compared with other pupils in the school which reflects the high quality of support they receive in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Improving pupils' reading skills is given a high priority. The weakest readers are taught to improve their reading using a phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) strategy, and information provided by school leaders indicates that this is successful in helping pupils to catch up. In a library lesson observed by inspectors, the majority of pupils were interested in their reading, were reading books appropriate to their reading ability and could talk with enthusiasm about books they had read by different authors.

16 to 19 study programmes

require improvement

- The 16 to 19 interim minimum standards (which are the government's minimum expectations for sixth form study) were met for the predecessor school, as are all the requirements of the current 16 to 19 study programme. However, learners' achievements have not been strong enough and many learners have not made the progress they should in their academic AS and vocational courses.
- Learners have the opportunity to resit GCSEs in English and mathematics. Only about half of the learners who were entered for mathematics in November were successful in improving their GCSE grade. There were no entries for GCSE English in November.
- Information provided by school leaders on the achievements of learners currently in the sixth form



- suggests improvement, with some of the weaknesses of the predecessor school being addressed because teaching is improving. However, learners told inspectors that teaching in science continues to be weak.
- Sixth form leaders have very recently reviewed the curriculum and more appropriate pathways are now in place to better meet learners' needs. This includes an 'access route' for Level 1 and Level 2 learners, many of whom speak English as an additional language; a 'bridge route' which includes a mix of Level 2 and Level 3 courses; and a 'professional route' for Level 3 courses alone.
- Workshops, delivered to learners through a tutorial programme, include making sure learners know how to keep themselves safe from the threats posed by extremism and radicalisation, how to avoid online grooming, e-safety awareness, effective money management, how to conduct respectful relationships and an understanding of democracy.
- Learners say they feel safe but sometimes do not give sufficient weight to their own personal safety, such as in following the correct signing-out procedures. Learners do not always sign out when they leave the site, when they are allowed to do so, and there are no procedures in place to follow this up.
- Sixth form attendance in the predecessor school was above that of other year groups, and above the national average for schools. However, information provided by school leaders suggests this has fallen.
- Learners are provided with the opportunity for a work placement which for some links with their career aspirations, although in reality learners say very few take up the opportunity of a placement.
- Learners are offered a range of activities outside their course of study, including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, the National Challenge programme and 'Give Back', in which learners volunteer to support other areas of the school such as being a 'buddy reader' in listening to pupils read or carrying out duties around the site.
- Learners receive good-quality careers education and guidance which provides information on further education, apprenticeships and employment.
- Learners are positive about their sixth form experience and the support they receive from their teachers in lessons, especially in information technology, psychology and sociology.



School details

Unique reference number142339Local authorityCoventryInspection number10017658

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school Secondary

School category Academy converter

Age range of pupils 11–18
Gender of pupils Mixed

Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study

programmes

Mixed

Number of pupils on the school roll 715

Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study

programmes

131

Appropriate authority The governing body

Chair Helen Hutchings

Headteacher Selwyn Calvin

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Email address schooladmin@barrshill.coventry.sch.uk

Date of previous inspectionNot previously inspected

Information about this school

- Barr's Hill School and Community College converted to become an academy school on 3 November 2015. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted in October 2012 it was judged to be good overall.
- The school forms part of The Futures Trust, a multi-academy trust organised through President Kennedy School in Coventry. The local authority has no role in supporting or challenging the school; support and challenge are provided through the trust.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized school.
- About three fifths of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups, with the largest proportion being of Black African heritage, but with a higher proportion than nationally of other heritages including Romany or Gypsy and Indian. About half of the pupils speak English as an additional language, which is much higher than the national figure. Over 60 different first languages are spoken by pupils whose origins include more than 30 different countries.
- The school has low stability as only about three quarters of pupils who complete Year 11 actually started in the school in Year 7. Many pupils are new arrivals to the country, including asylum seekers and refugees.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is high. Almost all of the pupils with a statement of special needs or an education, health and care plan are classed as having speech, language and communication needs. The school has a specialised Speech and Language Unit which provides support for 10 pupils.



- More than half of the pupils are supported by pupil premium funding which is a much larger proportion than average.
- Two pupils attend alternative or off-site provision at Step Back to Step Up to study hair and beauty and Brakes for motor vehicle studies.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection began as a section 8 no formal designation inspection as a result of concerns about the school's provision to safeguard and protect pupils. The lead inspector deemed the no formal designation inspection a full section 5 inspection at the end of the first day.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, including observation of teaching and learning in 19 lessons and 14 short visits to other lessons. Pupils' work in books was reviewed and inspectors talked to pupils about their work during lessons.
- Meetings were held with senior and other leaders, the Chief Executive Officer of The Futures Trust and a group of governors including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils as they arrived for school, during breaks and lunchtimes and gathered information on pupils' attitudes to learning during their lessons.
- A group of sixth form learners met with an inspector to talk about their experience of the 16 to 19 study programme in the school.
- A thorough check was made of the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe. A variety of other information was reviewed in detail, including information on pupils' achievements, attendance and behaviour.
- Parents' views from Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, could not be taken into account as there were too few responses to show results. Inspectors scrutinised the school's own surveys of the views of parents.
- Staff views were considered through the 53 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

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