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7 July 2016

Mr Phil Crompton  
Arnold Hill Academy  
Gedling Road  
Arnold  
Nottingham  
NG5 6NZ

Dear Mr Crompton

### **No formal designation monitoring inspection of Arnold Hill Academy**

Following my visit with Nigel Boyd, Ofsted Inspector, and David Carter, Senior Her Majesty's Inspector to your school on 7–8 June 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils at the school.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, inspectors visited 32 lessons and five tutor-time sessions. They held meetings with you, the executive headteacher, the chair of governors, a group of pupils, the deputy headteacher and the leader with responsibility for pupils' behaviour. Inspectors scrutinised a range of relevant policies and documents, including the single central record. They also held informal conversations with pupils and members of staff.

Having considered the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and managers have taken effective action to improve behaviour and secure consistently positive attitudes to learning.

## Context

There are 1,611 pupils on roll at the school. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and most speak English as their first language. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium is below average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is also below average. Pupils usually stay at the school for most if not all of their secondary education and the stability of the pupil population is higher than average. There has been a high turnover of staff over recent years and 23 teachers joined the school in September 2015. The school has been successful in recruiting teachers to fill any vacancies that have arisen this year, so the school will be fully staffed in September 2016.

The school has responded promptly to the previous inspection report by launching the new policy 'managing pupils positively'. This sets out clearly leaders' raised expectations for pupils' behaviour. Leaders communicated the policy well to staff in whole-school training between November 2015 and January 2016, to parents by letter and to pupils in assemblies, so that everyone knows what is expected of them. Pupils demonstrated to inspectors their familiarity with the new systems and stated that 'they are better than the old system'. Pupils explained to inspectors that the policy works well because it is 'stricter' and that 'detentions happen quicker if things don't improve'. The policy also emphasises the importance of rewards. Pupils are keen to increase their number of positive behaviour points, with points tables reviewed regularly in tutor-time sessions and pupils eager to see if they reach the 'Top 100' in half-termly celebration assemblies.

Leaders accurately evaluate how well the policy is being used by teachers because they carry out regular monitoring. They recognise rightly where there are strengths and where there is still work to be done in some subject areas to ensure that their high expectations are met.

Leaders ensure that incidents of poor behaviour are recorded efficiently and this information is analysed to see how effective the school's strategies are in improving behaviour. Their thorough analysis shows peaks in fixed-term exclusions in the half term following the launch of the new policy. This reflects the higher expectations and leaders' more stringent approach to behaviour management. Pupils are adjusting well to the new raised expectations so that there are early signs of improvement, as indicated in the reduced numbers of fixed-term exclusions and increased levels of reward points.

Leaders also use this analysis wisely to identify patterns of incidence of poor behaviour, by looking at, for example, the frequency, and reasons for use, of internal exclusion. Senior leaders then ensure that teachers and pupils receive support when they most need it, so that pupils' behaviour in lessons improves.

Pupils generally have positive attitudes towards their studies. They are responsive to their teachers' expectations for completion of work and are respectful towards each other. Inspectors saw few examples of low-level disruption. When this did occur, it

was generally in the form of pupils being distracted by conversations with each other. It persisted because of teachers' low expectations and their inconsistent use of the behaviour policy. This matches the experience of pupils who stated to inspectors that most interruptions to learning are due to chatting which escalates so the classroom becomes very noisy. They say that a few teachers issue warnings unfairly or do not use the behaviour policy at all.

Leaders ensure that there are high levels of supervision of pupils' behaviour between lessons and at the start and end of the school day. Pupils confirmed that the level of supervision seen by inspectors was typical. Teachers are vigilant to any departure from the standards of conduct they expect and pupils respond appropriately to reminders, for example, about use of mobile phones and the uniform policy. As a consequence, inspectors saw very little infringement of the uniform policy.

Leaders acknowledge rightly that pupils' punctuality to lessons needs to improve. While in the mornings staff rigorously follow up late arrival at the school gates, teachers and pupils are at other times more complacent about the need for punctuality. The logistics of the split site with its extensive building works currently delay some pupils. Leaders recognise the importance of raising expectations when the new building opens in September and there is no excuse for being late to lessons.

While the school's overall levels of attendance and permanent exclusions are lower than average, leaders know that more work is needed to improve the attendance and behaviour of some pupil groups, particularly disadvantaged pupils and pupils special educational needs or disability. Leaders ensure that their explicit attendance policy is put effectively into practice so that staff follow up pupils' absence promptly. Their rigorous approach, alongside efforts to engage with families and productive work with outside agencies, is leading to improvements in attendance for individual pupils. Leaders are also considerate of pupils' circumstances that cause them to be absent more than they should be.

Leaders have introduced a range of effective interventions for pupils who have had at least one fixed-term exclusion. Heads of year work closely with individual pupils, ensuring they have the support they need to help them manage their behaviour better. One effective strategy is when pupils are mentored by sixth-form students. Pupils value the opportunity to meet regularly with the older students, whom they see as positive role models. Pupils can describe specific ways in which they have acquired a more mature attitude towards their education as a result of the conversations they have had with the sixth formers. Overall, leaders' actions have led to a decrease in fixed-term exclusions.

Pupils of all ages mix well. When meeting with an inspector, pupils from a range of year groups were impressive in their openness about their own difficulties and how they resolved them. They engaged very naturally in discussions with each other, comfortable with sharing ideas and listening to others' opinions about the pros and cons of the new behaviour strategy. They said they appreciated the opportunity to meet together in this way as they were interested in hearing the views of, and comparing notes with, those in other year groups.

Pupils say that they feel safe in the school and there are no areas on the school site where they feel unsafe. Pupils state that bullying is rare and several pupils told inspectors about their own experience of bullying and how this was sorted out very quickly by teachers. Pupils told inspectors about assemblies to help them to understand the dangers of cyber bullying. They also found an assembly on lesbian, gay and bisexual as well as transgender issues especially informative and impressive. However, they state that name-calling does occur, although they do not consider this to be bullying but more teasing and 'not meaning any harm'. They include homophobic language in this and, while they understand this is wrong, they state that this is fairly common and often not picked up by teachers. Racist incidents are very rare and are dealt with effectively so that they are not repeated. Leaders acknowledge the need for more explicit guidance on different types of bullying in their anti-bullying policy.

The single central record indicates that leaders ensure all required checks of staff are made when they join the school. In addition, records helpfully show when members of staff complete safeguarding training.

### **External support**

The school has benefited greatly from intensified support received from the Trent Academies Group since the last inspection. In particular, the secondment of staff from Rushcliffe School has been highly valuable, helping the school to launch and implement the new behaviour policy. The chair of governors appreciates the opportunity to meet with other chairs of governing bodies to share good practice across the group. The governors are supported well by the local authority.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Ensure that teachers and pupils take punctuality throughout the day as seriously as being on time at the start of the day, so that lateness to lessons is rare.
- Establish the use of the behaviour policy so that levels of absence and exclusion continue to fall, especially those of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs or disability.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Nottinghamshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Carter-Fraser  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**