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Ms Tracey Hemming
Executive Headteacher
Barnhill Community High School
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Dear Ms Hemming

Short inspection of Barnhill Community High School

Following my visit to the school on 14 September 2016 with Hayley Follett, Ofsted Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in March 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Following your appointment in September 2015 you took prompt and effective action to reverse an emerging downward trend in the school's performance. Leaders have focused on the key areas identified as weaknesses at the last inspection. This has improved pupils' performance and secured a good quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Furthermore, you have taken effective action to address other areas that you identified after joining the school. You have raised expectations for behaviour and for what pupils can achieve, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. As a result, disadvantaged pupils now make much better progress and their attainment is improving. There is a more purposeful and effective culture for learning that pupils and staff recognise and appreciate. You have changed the structure of the curriculum so that it now allows all pupils to succeed.

You and the school's leadership team have an accurate understanding of the school's current position. The school's development planning accurately identifies areas for further improvement in order to realise leaders' and governors' lofty ambitions. The newly arrived head of school fully shares your highly aspirational vision and clarity of purpose for further school improvement.

Recent leadership appointments have underpinned improved performance. Leaders have focused particularly sharply on the progress made by disadvantaged, White British and most-able pupils. You have drawn on links with local primary schools, including from within the Barnhill Partnership Trust, to develop fresh approaches to

meeting pupils' needs. For example, new schemes of work are now in place in English to ensure that Year 7 make a flying start. Inspectors observed teachers consistently using their knowledge of pupils' needs to plan lessons that pupils enjoyed and in which they made good progress from their starting points. This reflects the whole-school approach aimed at raising aspirations and pushing the most able pupils towards the best grades.

Leaders recognise where further improvement is needed in the sixth form and are realistic about the work still to do. Lower-attaining students, in particular, have underperformed historically because they were not on the best courses to meet their needs. The curriculum has now been reshaped and entry criteria reviewed in order to support students' decision-making. More effective advice and guidance now accompany the new course offer. As a result, leaders expect the performance of students in academic subjects to rise quickly to match students' strong performance in work-related subjects.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that the school's arrangements for safeguarding and keeping pupils safe are robust. A governors' audit of the school's safeguarding procedures and an ongoing audit of the 'Prevent' duty have further enhanced school systems.

The school's pastoral, welfare and child protection teams work well with external agencies and within the school community so that issues are addressed quickly and effectively. Pupils know whom to go to with concerns and value the support that the school provides to help keep them safe. Pupils told inspectors about the effective training they have received through the personal, social and health education lessons on topics such as female genital mutilation and keeping themselves safe within their local communities. Pupils also told inspectors how instances of bullying are rare and, where they do occur, they are dealt with well by staff, reducing the risk to pupils' welfare.

The culture of safeguarding in the school builds from a secure understanding of the issues faced by the school and local community. Effective safeguarding training, encompassing the latest statutory guidance, supports staff to act swiftly and appropriately when necessary. Pre-employment checks made on staff's suitability to work with children are carefully listed on the school's single central record.

Inspection findings

- Changes to the curriculum model mean that sufficient time is now allocated to all subjects, and courses lead to useful qualifications. Pupils' progress improved last year at GCSE as a result, reversing the emerging downward trend. In science the most able, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are now entered for three science GCSEs. This is already showing some success, with the first Year 10 cohort under this model making good progress in biology.

- Leaders' strategy for using pupil premium funding is rooted in their strong moral imperative to improve the chances of disadvantaged pupils and children looked after. Disadvantaged pupils are making better progress and the difference between their achievement and other pupils nationally is diminishing. Overall, pupils' progress from low starting points has improved. A more stubborn difference remains between the attainment and progress of disadvantaged White British boys and their peers. Leaders are aware of this and have begun to address it.
- The assessment system enables teachers to closely monitor pupils' performance, intervening quickly when necessary. Most teachers make effective use of assessment information in their planning. As a result of this, and well-pitched questions and activities, most pupils make strong progress from their starting points.
- The school's professional development programme and appraisal system underpin quality teaching in most subjects and support teachers in need of further training. A focus on pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged and most-able pupils has created consistency in teaching across subjects.
- The whole-school literacy strategy enables lower-attaining pupils to learn well. Pupils told inspectors about the established culture of reading in the school, and they value this highly. Pupils with lower prior attainment are well supported to improve their reading when joining the school, and their reading abilities improve quickly. The most able pupils read with fluency.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and during social times reflects their positive attitudes to learning and their school community. Instances of bullying are rare and pupils told inspectors that behaviour has improved markedly since the arrival of the executive headteacher. Pupils treat each other with respect and view the diversity within the school as part of what makes the school special to them.
- Leaders' heightened expectations resulted in an increase in fixed-term exclusions last year. However, pupils' attendance has improved and historic trends in exclusions and attendance for vulnerable groups are diminishing. The strong work of the pastoral team, and close work with the local authority and other external agencies, means that previously persistent cases are well managed and individuals are well supported. Governors are supportive of leaders' high expectations and challenge them to ensure that the number of exclusions falls.
- Students studying work-related courses in the sixth form have performed well historically and this trend continues. Academic courses overall have performed less well due to historic weaknesses in advice and guidance for some students.
- Leaders recognise that there is work to do to improve the sixth form, have made appropriate plans and begun to implement them. Teachers use the assessment system more consistently to closely monitor students' progress against aspirational targets. Interventions are in place to provide further support for students who need it. Current students are now being better prepared for more appropriate courses.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- all groups of students on 16 to 19 study programmes make excellent progress, particularly lower-attaining students in academic subjects
- fixed-term exclusions decline rapidly, reflecting leaders' expectations for pupils' behaviour
- progress and attainment of disadvantaged White British boys quickly improve.

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

Yours sincerely

Matt Tiplin
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with leaders, staff, governors and members of the Barnhill Partnership Trust. They spoke to pupils both formally and informally during lessons and social times. Inspectors considered the responses received from parents, pupils and staff to Ofsted's online questionnaires. They visited 16 lessons with members of the senior leadership team and scrutinised pupils' work both in lessons and separately. Inspectors scrutinised school documentation including assessment information, behaviour and attendance records, policies and procedures, minutes of governors' meetings, leaders' evaluation of the school's performance and development planning, and the single central record of pre-employment checks made on staff.