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Richard Reeve
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Dear Mr Reeve

Requires improvement monitoring inspection of Buile Hill Academy

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 16 November 2023, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and took place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous graded (section 5) inspections.

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's overall effectiveness, but to identify and report on the school's progress. It is to highlight to the school and parents any improvements that school leaders have made since the school's previous graded inspection.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and other senior and middle leaders, the deputy chief executive officer (CEO), leaders of the Consilium Trust, trustees and a representative of the local authority the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also met with groups of pupils and staff and visited some lessons. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to become good.

The school should take further action to:

- swiftly increase pupils' attendance so that more pupils benefit from the education that is on offer;

- ensure that the expectations of pupils' behaviour are communicated clearly and applied consistently.

Main findings

Since the inspection in June 2022, there have been considerable changes in leadership in the school. The headteacher left in the summer of 2023 and an interim headteacher was appointed. The interim headteacher is not in school currently and you took up your temporary post, as interim headteacher, three days prior to the start of the inspection. Several new curriculum leaders have been appointed. There have been changes at local academy board level (LAB) and the trust are recruiting to fill these vacancies. The school is in the process of being re-brokered to another multi-academy trust.

With help from the trust, the curriculum has been broadened and strengthened. There is a greater choice of subjects at key stage 4. The personal, social and health education programme, alongside religious education now have dedicated curriculum time within the timetable. Collaborative working across the trust has developed an increased understanding of curriculum design and delivery.

Subject curriculums are increasingly well-organised. Most curriculums are arranged so that pupils' learning builds logically over time. The essential knowledge that pupils need to know and remember is clearly identified. Pupils benefit from the opportunities that are built into lessons to help them recall and consolidate key learning.

The school uses appropriate checks to determine pupils' reading ability. Pupils who are at the earlier stages of reading are identified swiftly and effective support is put in place to develop their phonics and comprehension knowledge. Dedicated reading time has been introduced in key stage 3. Pupils are enjoying reading more because they have had a role in selecting the books in the library.

The impact of these positive changes is not reflected in published examination results. In 2023, pupils' progress and attainment at the end of key stage 4 were significantly below the national averages. This is as a result of the weak curriculum that was in place previously. The poor attendance of many pupils was also a contributory factor in pupils' weak achievement.

Pupils in key stage 3 are benefiting from the new curriculum that is now in place. This means that their achievement is improving over time. The school is keenly focused on filling the gaps in knowledge of the current key stage 4 pupils, particularly those in Year 11. However, poor attendance is still a barrier to pupils making the most of the improved curriculum offer.

A trust-wide assessment policy, with associated staff training, has developed teachers' expertise in the different types of assessment strategies. This is helping them to identify gaps and inform future learning. These improved systems mean that staff are better able to identify pupils who are at risk of not keeping up with the pace of the curriculum.

Subject leaders work together across the trust's schools, supported by a trust leader, to continually develop the curriculum and its implementation.

Following the last inspection, the school has also prioritised the programme that promotes pupils' personal development. They are taught how to keep themselves safe and about healthy relationships. There are extensive opportunities for pupils to develop their interests and talents beyond the school curriculum. Pupils spoke confidently and articulately about their future learning and career aspirations.

Although the school has also prioritised improving pupils' behaviour, the impact of this work is variable. The trust has employed additional staff to work with pupils and their families to put support in place to improve their behaviour. There has been extensive training to help staff understand and deal effectively with misbehaviour. However, staff are at different stages in ensuring that pupils understand the higher expectations set for their conduct. In addition, some staff do not apply the new approaches to behaviour consistently well. As a result, some pupils continue to disrupt learning. Suspensions from school remain high.

The trust is committed to improving the education provided for pupils at this school. It, and the school, understand what has to be done to drive further improvements. The action plans to support school improvement are sensible and appropriate.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the interim CEO of the Consilium trust, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Salford. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Niamh Howlett
His Majesty's Inspector