

Barr's Hill School and Community College

Radford Road, Coventry, West Midlands CV1 4BU

Inspection dates

18–19 September 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The recently appointed headteacher and his dedicated leadership team have an unwavering determination to improve this school. They know their school very well and have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their self-evaluation is robust and accurate.
- Outcomes in the past have been weak. Recent outcomes for pupils are markedly improved. This is because of effective teaching and a newly designed, balanced curriculum. Leaders track pupils' performance rigorously, so that they can put effective support in place when pupils fall behind and need to catch up.
- Senior leaders evaluate rigorously the quality of teaching. They support teachers to continuously improve their practice. Staff training is highly effective and supports leaders' drive for excellence.
- Leaders, governors and the trust have, in a short period of time, created a culture and ethos around the school which is inclusive and driven towards high outcomes for all learners. The school operates a mantra of 'students first'.
- Behaviour in lessons and at social times is good. Pupils are courteous, friendly and well mannered. They speak with confidence about their learning.
- Pupils feel safe at school and are complimentary about the pastoral support they receive when they need it. Pupils feel valued and cared for.
- Governors hold leaders to account effectively. They are dedicated and know the strengths of the school and what actions need to be taken to improve further.
- Parents, staff and pupils are supportive of school leaders and feel that the school has improved markedly since the appointment of the new headteacher.
- The sixth form is not yet good because available information is not routinely analysed to inform leaders of where improvements are most urgently needed.
- Fixed-term exclusions and persistent absences are above national averages. Leaders are aware of this and have robust action plans in place to reduce these.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the 16 to 19 programme of study by ensuring that leaders:
 - routinely and systematically analyse information available to them to have a full overview of students' attainment and progress
 - formalise work-related learning opportunities to ensure that more students benefit from work-related learning
 - introduce, monitor and evaluate improvement strategies with a clear focus on raising students' outcomes.
- Make sure that there is a clear focus to reduce further the number of occurrences resulting in pupils being excluded for a fixed term.
- Improve parental communication and engagement with parents of those pupils who are persistently absent from school, ensuring that pupils attend school more frequently.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and senior leadership team have been in place for approximately one academic year. In this short time, they have changed the school's ethos, raised aspirations and introduced highly effective systems and robust structures. These have resulted in significant improvements across the school. For example, teaching and behaviour are now good and outcomes for all groups of pupils have improved markedly.
- Leaders, governors and 'the Futures Trust' are unwavering in their drive for excellence. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses and work collaboratively to address any underperformance. For example, staffing turbulence has been an issue in the past. Consequently, leaders have addressed this with the help of the trust and, as a result, this academic year the school is fully staffed with expert teachers in every learning area.
- Leaders review regularly their own performance and put in place well-focused plans for further improvements. This is now an inclusive school in which everyone is valued and cared for and makes progress. Staff have unanimously bought in to the shared common values of 'students first'.
- The leadership of teaching, learning and assessment is a clear strength. Senior leaders accurately evaluate and analyse teachers' performance. They act quickly to address any underperformance they identify. For example, highly effective staff training is valued by teachers and has resulted in improved teaching across the school.
- Middle leaders form a dedicated and highly focused group of professionals. They are consistent in their messages and drive for improvement. Recent ownership of their areas of responsibility is having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. For example, in 2018 there have been improvements in outcomes for pupils in almost all subject areas. A shared language among middle leaders is used to enable them to consistently address issues, identify any underperformance, share best practice and then disseminate that practice within their departments. Regular subject focus meetings across the trust offer further support and opportunities for middle leaders to sharpen their practice.
- Newly qualified teachers regard highly the support that they receive. They feel fully supported as they develop their skills in teaching and managing pupils' behaviour. They value the quality of the training and the way in which leaders encourage them to be reflective practitioners. Through this support, newly qualified teachers are already able to speak with passion and knowledge about a range of educational topics. They understand their role, for example in improving pupils' long-term career prospects by encouraging and mentoring them to aim for the best universities in the country. Teachers act as role models for pupils.
- Senior leaders use and evaluate effectively the impact of additional funding they receive. For instance, one-to-one support and targeted, timely interventions are planned carefully and reviewed for their impact on outcomes. Furthermore, 'The Bridge', a nurture setting for pupils in Year 7 and those who need to catch up, has

been established to help pupils' transition into secondary school and catch up on basic skills, such as English language acquisition and literacy skills. As a result, many pupils who speak English as an additional language quickly become proficient in English. Year 7 pupils value the Bridge as their 'safe place'.

- The school's curriculum offers a balanced breadth of learning experiences which are tailored to pupils' individual needs and circumstances. Pupils choose carefully their key stage 4 courses with support from their teachers. The new key stage 3 curriculum prepares pupils well for making decisions about their future education.
- The school's work to provide pupils with careers information, advice and guidance is strong. It has a highly positive impact on pupils' destinations. Leaders provide a range of exciting opportunities for pupils to meet with employers and universities. Pupils go on to a variety of destinations that match their aspirations and abilities. Pupils are prepared well for their next steps.
- Leaders have created a truly inclusive ethos in the school in which every pupil is valued. Pupils feel safe and parents and staff agree that children are safe and well cared for at the school. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View would recommend the school to other parents.

Governance of the school

- Governance at the school is strong. Governors know the school well and have a clear view of the strengths and those areas the school needs to further improve. They are dedicated to the school and possess many strengths. They bring a range of relevant experiences and expertise to their roles.
- Members of the governing body have high expectations of the school's performance and strive for a school where pupils are happy, receive an excellent education and grow as human beings. They believe that their pupils 'deserve the very best'.
- Governors provide an effective balance of support and challenge to the school's leadership team. They use information gathered through visits to school, as well as from reports provided by leaders, to ask challenging questions in order to bring about further improvements.
- Governors discharge their statutory duties with diligence. They monitor the school's budget carefully. They check that safeguarding arrangements are robust and ensure that systems to manage teachers' performance focus on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff work together to create a culture of safeguarding which is underpinned by regular training for every member of staff at the school. All staff agree that leaders make pupils' welfare and safety a priority.
- The safeguarding and pastoral teams work constructively with relevant external agencies. Staff are persistent when they are concerned about a pupil's welfare and follow up concerns with these agencies as necessary.

- All pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they feel safe in school. Pupils have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. They understand the risks surrounding online safety and social media, for example. Pupils benefit from regular focus weeks in which a wide range of age-appropriate safeguarding issues are discussed. For example, at the time of the inspection school ran a series of pre-planned assemblies for all year groups on the theme of risks, called 'Is it worth the risk?'

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders monitor rigorously the quality of teaching across the curriculum. As a result, teaching in almost all subjects has improved and is now strong. Consequently, pupils' outcomes in 2018 have improved markedly. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and foster strong and respectful relationships. They have good subject knowledge and plan lessons that use a range of innovative strategies to stimulate pupils' interest and curiosity.
- Teachers give ongoing verbal feedback to pupils. They check pupils' understanding effectively and provide support and intervention when pupils fall behind and need to catch up. Pupils speak highly of the support they receive in lessons and feel well supported to do their best.
- Senior leaders have recognised that in the past the school's assessment system was not fit for purpose and did not provide useful or reliable information about how well pupils were achieving. As a result, they have introduced an effective and reliable system of collecting progress information. This has led to leaders being able to put timely and effective interventions in place to help pupils catch up and close any gaps in their knowledge. Consequently, pupils' outcomes have improved significantly in 2018.
- Leaders regularly assess pupils' progress and use this information to identify priorities for staff training. Teachers work closely with colleagues across the trust and they frequently moderate work. This helps everyone to reach a common understanding about the expected standards within GCSE examinations.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities made weaker progress in the past. A focus on targeted support and bespoke intervention has resulted in pupils receiving specialist support. As a result, the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is improving, albeit from a low starting point.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above the national average. Many pupils enter the school with no English or very basic English language skills. The school's 'Bridge' facility offers bespoke, individualised and targeted teaching by specialised staff. As a result, many pupils quickly become proficient in English. The quality of teaching English to pupils who speak English as an additional language that is provided in 'The Bridge' is exceptional.
- Pupils have the capability and maturity to tackle higher and deeper thinking during challenging topics within a range of subjects. This aids their personal development and strengthens their understanding of current and topical issues. On rare occasions, when tasks are provided to keep pupils busy rather than to deepen their learning, pupils can become disengaged from their learning.
- Teachers plan lessons that are well matched to pupils' needs and abilities. Pupils

benefit from teachers' strong subject knowledge and enthusiasm for their subjects. At times, when tasks are too easy and do not provide adequate challenge for the more able pupils, pupils lack engagement in their learning. Leaders are aware of this and have effective plans in place to address this issue. It is too soon to judge the impact of these actions.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The pastoral support provided by the school is a strength. Pupils, parents and staff are unanimous in their praise for the help, support and guidance pupils receive when they need it.
- The school is proud of its inclusive ethos where every pupil is valued and cared for. Pupils say that bullying is rare. They have every confidence that when it does occur it is dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff.
- Pupils wear their uniform with pride and look smart. They are friendly, courteous and respectful of each other and staff. They are proud of their school and look after the school environment. As a result, the school's buildings are free from litter and graffiti.
- Leaders monitor carefully the well-being of pupils who attend alternative provision. They track pupils' attendance and progress. Leaders chose the courses for these pupils based on their interests and individual needs. When appropriate, these provide them with knowledge and experience that will help them choose further study or work. Leaders visit and keep in regular contact with these providers to ensure that pupils are safe.
- Leaders plan the curriculum to ensure that pupils have a good understanding of current and topical issues such as extremist views and online risks. Pupils benefit from regular safeguarding assemblies. During the inspection the school ran a week of safeguarding assemblies centred around risks, called 'Is it worth the risk?'
- Pupils do not yet have many opportunities to explore leadership positions through the school's pupil leadership scheme.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and learning time is rarely wasted. Behaviour during social times and in corridors at lesson changeover is calm and orderly. Nearly all the pupils who spoke with inspectors confirmed that the behaviour around school and in lessons is good. Parents who responded to Parent View and staff who completed the staff survey agreed that behaviour has improved considerably since the appointment of the new school leadership team.
- Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Staff supervision is high while at the same time allowing pupils the opportunity to self-correct their behaviour. Pupils

observed during lunchtime, for example, behaved in a respectful and orderly manner. Inspectors saw no instances of poor behaviour.

- The behaviour of pupils who attend alternative provision is monitored closely. Leaders communicate effectively and regularly with the providers to ensure that high standards of discipline are maintained. Leaders closely liaise with parents of pupils at these settings and inform them about how well their child is doing.
- Fixed-term exclusions are above the national average. This sanction is having a positive impact on managing pupils' behaviour. However, pupils lose learning time as a result. Further work is needed to continue to reduce the times pupils are excluded from school for a fixed term.
- Although school leaders generally engage well with parents, the communication with parents whose children are persistently absent from school is less effective. As a result, the rate of persistent absences remains high. Leaders have made this a priority for improvement across the school and have put effective plans in place to improve this situation. It is too early to see the impact of these actions on improved attendance figures.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' outcomes have improved markedly in a range of subjects, including in English and mathematics during the last academic year. This is following a decline in pupils' performance in GCSE examinations up until the end of the academic year in 2017. Leaders have worked effectively to reverse this decline and ensure good outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders' analysis of recent assessment information suggests that the improvements from 2018 are set to continue and in many cases improve further for pupils currently in the school. This is true for all pupil groups, including disadvantaged pupils, in a wide range of subjects.
- Pupils join the school with well-below average prior attainment. Leaders have devised effective intervention techniques to address these shortcomings. 'The Bridge' provides targeted and individualised teaching sessions to raise pupils' basic literacy skills, for example. All Year 7 pupils are taught exclusively in this setting to ensure that any gaps in knowledge are closed and shortfalls addressed. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are taught exceptionally well to become proficient in English. As a result, they make rapid gains.
- Disadvantaged pupils have historically underperformed significantly. Leaders have recognised this and have put targeted and individualised interventions in place. As a result, disadvantaged pupils' outcomes improved considerably. For example, in 2018 27% of disadvantaged pupils achieved a grade 5 or above in English and mathematics, an improvement from 6% in 2017.
- The achievement of pupils at alternative provision is carefully monitored and analysed. Their curriculum has appropriately been adapted to prepare them well for their next steps in education.
- Pupils follow an appropriate curriculum at both key stages 3 and 4 which is designed to prepare them well for their next steps in education or training. A greater number of

pupils now take courses leading to the English baccalaureate. Leaders use the information they have about pupils to plan individually designed GCSE pathways. Consequently, the number of pupils who leave the school and go onto further education, employment or apprenticeships is high and rising.

- The more able pupils' outcomes were weak in 2017. Preliminary outcome information for 2018 shows that this decline has been stemmed and the more able pupils have made much better progress. Leaders recognise that more work needs to be done to ensure that these pupils reach their full potential. Leaders have devised detailed and focused plans to address this issue further. For example, more staff training to provide adequate stretch and challenge activities in lessons are scheduled.
- While the outcomes for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are improving, these pupils continue to do less well in some subjects and inconsistencies remain. Leaders have analysed this information and have put effective plans in place to tackle this underperformance. It is too early to see the impact of these actions on pupils' outcomes.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- The leaders of the sixth form were appointed in September 2018. The previous leadership of this area of the school lacked focus and precision to bring about much needed improvements. As a result, outcomes for students declined in 2017. The sixth-form leadership is now a joint undertaking between two schools of the Futures Trust. Although very new in post, leaders have begun to stem the decline in the sixth form.
- The quality of teaching is improving, and teachers have secure subject knowledge. They plan lessons which engage and motivate students. Teachers have high expectations of students and foster respectful relationships with them.
- Outcomes in the sixth form require improvement because too many students in the past have been completing unsuitable qualifications and/or did not complete their courses. Outcomes in 2018 showed some improvements, albeit from very low starting points.
- The curriculum has been transformed to ensure that students complete courses that match their abilities and needs. Students are now on courses that will support their future careers and prepare them well for their next steps.
- In the past, leaders did not routinely analyse the information that they held about their students. As a result, interventions were planned too late, proving ineffective for students. Current leaders have detailed plans and robust systems in place to track, monitor and evaluate students' achievements. It is too soon to see the impact of these plans.
- The school's work to ensure that students have the opportunity for work-based learning is not as effective as it could be. Too few students benefit from these placements. As a result, not enough students gain an insight into their future career choices. Leaders have well-thought-out plans to rectify this in place, but it is too soon to evaluate their impact.
- All students benefit from effective careers advice and guidance. As a result, the vast majority of students move onto universities, further education, apprenticeships or

employment. Leaders are rigorous in the tracking of students' destinations. For example, almost all pupils who left the sixth form recently went on to employment, higher or further education or apprenticeships.

- Students behave impeccably. They are courteous and very complimentary about their sixth form. They feel safe and well supported, and most would recommend the sixth form to their younger peers.

School details

Unique reference number	142339
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	10048412

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	668
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	50
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair	Mr Tony Fitzpatrick
Headteacher	Mr Chris Jupp
Telephone number	02476 234600
Website	www.barrshill.coventry.sch.uk
Email address	schooladmin@barrshill.coventry.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8–9 March 2016

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller than average secondary school.
- The school is a member of the Futures Trust multi-academy trust.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations set for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average.

- Part-time, one/two days per week, off-site alternative provision is currently provided for seven pupils in Years 10 and 11 at Coventry City Council's 'work-related learning' programme.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation. This included: the school’s self-evaluation and action plans; school policies; information about pupils’ attainment and progress, behaviour, attendance and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 44 lessons and parts of lessons across a wide range of subjects and key stages and observed some lessons with a senior leader. They observed pupils’ behaviour between lessons and at breaktime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors evaluated the work in pupils’ books and folders in lessons across a range of year groups and in the sixth form.
- Inspectors held meetings with governors, senior and middle leaders, and teachers, including those that are newly qualified. The lead inspector also held a meeting with the CEO of the Futures Trust.
- The views of parents were considered through the 27 responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s online questionnaire, as well as the free-text comments parents provided.
- Inspectors considered 53 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire for staff.
- Pupils met with inspectors in four separate focus groups. Inspectors had numerous informal discussions with pupils and considered 39 responses to the pupil online questionnaire.

Inspection team

Bianka Zemke, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Rob Steed	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Howes	Ofsted Inspector
Jacqueline Newsome	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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