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19 June 2015

Mr John Fletcher  
Headteacher  
The Beaconsfield School  
Wattleton Road  
Beaconsfield  
HP9 1SJ

Dear Mr Fletcher

### **No formal designation monitoring inspection of The Beaconsfield School**

Following my visit to your school on 18 June 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and the time you took to discuss behaviour in your school.

The inspection was a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with the no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about behaviour at the school.

### **Evidence**

Inspectors considered evidence including:

- observations of students' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in lessons
- observations of students' behaviour throughout the day, including discussion with students
- documentary evidence
- discussions with school leaders and staff.

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

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

### **Context**

The Beaconsfield School is smaller than an average non-selective secondary school in a local authority which operates a selective system. The students come from a

range of ethnic backgrounds. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. About one in five students come from other ethnic backgrounds, the largest group being of Pakistani origin. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is much lower than the national figure. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average and that of students who have a statement of educational needs is above average. The proportion of students eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional government funding for children who are looked after by the local authority and students known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average. The proportion of students who join and leave the school other than at the start of year 7 or the end of year 11 is a little below the national average. A small number of students are educated off-site at Chiltern Skills Enterprise Centre. Three teachers have left since the last inspection and ten are leaving this summer. The school is almost fully staffed for September. One vacancy remains for a physical education teacher.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Students' behaviour has improved since the last inspection in October in 2014. Students typically conduct themselves well around the school site. They are respectful and polite. They behave well in the corridors and stairways as they move to and from lessons. Teachers increasingly take responsibility for the area outside their classroom and make sure all is well. At break and lunchtime students socialise happily in and around the school canteen and on the school field. The atmosphere is welcoming and friendly. Staff now wear high-visibility jackets so students can see them from afar, across the large school site. Students report that this makes unruly behaviour, which was already rare, even more unlikely. Occasionally, some boys become a little over boisterous in their play. Staff are typically quickly at hand to remind them of the need to be sensible and the boys respond well to this. Students arrive and leave school in an orderly manner. However, at the start of the day I witnessed one incident of overly boisterous behaviour. This went unchecked because there were no staff nearby. You should consider if this was an isolated incident or if before school duty arrangements need tightening.

You rightly recognised that although behaviour in class has been improving, your behaviour management approach was not proving effective enough in tackling minor, yet persistent, low-level disruption. You are taking bold steps to address this. Your recently introduced zero-tolerance approach is making a difference. First you have sensibly focused on cutting out disruptions at the start of lessons. Students who arrive late or without the right equipment immediately receive a yellow slip that results in a lunchtime detention. Students who do not attend this detention receive further sanctions. Staff across the school are applying the new approach with rigour. Students are getting the message and the number making the same mistake again is increasingly low. Not all students are happy with this 'yellow slip' approach. Some need a little more help to understand why it is necessary and how not to make the same mistake again. Nevertheless, in the main students agree this approach has made a noticeable difference to the start of lessons. During my visit, students arrived promptly and equipped to learn. Classes quickly settled down to work. You rightly plan to extend this approach to tackling a wider range of low-level disruptive behaviour during the next few weeks. You are on track to have the approach fully

established for the autumn term. However, some issues need further attention. In most classes a few students are inclined to not concentrate on learning and chatter if they get a chance. Some teachers are not picking this up or tackling it. At times they talk over students rather than insisting on silence. Some lessons are not planned well enough to fully engage students' interest. In these lessons students do not always get enough work to do at a suitable level of challenge. Teachers' question and answer sessions are not consistently effective in holding the attention of the class. Students are more inclined to become bored or distracted than in lessons which are better planned. More broadly, teachers do not make enough use of praise to highlight and encourage good behaviour. Furthermore, a few teachers resort to raising their voice unnecessarily and sometimes shout as a first response when students do not immediately comply with a request.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Make sure that all teachers have the necessary skills to plan and teach lessons that engage students' interest, motivate them to pay attention and enable them to work hard.
- Ensure that teachers routinely highlight, praise and reward good behaviour, thereby helping students to understand what is expected and motivating them to behave well.
- Ensure that your new zero-tolerance 'yellow slip' approach continues to be applied rigorously as it develops. Refine and adapt it as needed over time.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Buckinghamshire, to the Secretary of State for Education and the Chair of the Governing Body. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Diana Choulerton  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**