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18 October 2017

Dear Parents / Carers

As you are aware, our Ofsted Inspection took place on 13th and 14th September 2017.

Thank you to all parents and carers who were able to attend one of the briefing meetings on Monday 16th October at which we shared the results of the inspection. Your support is greatly appreciated and we will take action on the points that you raised. We recognise that it is not always possible for everyone to attend school meetings and therefore it is our intention that this letter will help to provide an explanation of the recent Ofsted report.

Firstly, it is once again evident that the success and strength of our school comes from the continued support and enthusiasm of our parents and carers. This is a real community school that we are all proud to be a part of and we want to thank you for your support.

Much has changed for Barton Hill Academy over the past three years and Ofsted recognised the improvements that we have made, which, over time has been evidenced in our results. As such, the school has been awarded a higher rating than our last inspection, when the school was placed in 'special measures'.

The current headline judgement is that the school 'requires significant improvement' and this accurately recognises that we are only part way through Barton Hill Academy's journey.

Over the past three years we have sought to create a positive and productive learning environment where our children are proud to be part of an energetic, diverse and vibrant community, feel safe and supported and where the core values of the school – Responsibility; Excellence; Success; Pride; Equality; Compassion and Tenacity - drive our development forward.

The Ofsted inspectors made a number of positive comments about the school and acknowledged that much progress has been made by the current leadership team which has accurately identified, and is acting on, the school's key priorities and areas identified for improvement.

Inspectors also stated that:

- Pupils are making faster progress than previously.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and enjoy coming to school.
- Attendance is improving quickly.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and pupils are safe.
- Leaders ensure that vulnerable pupils receive the support they require.
- The capacity of leaders and governors for improvement is now effective and they are acting quickly and successfully to tackle the legacy of poor teaching and learning.
- Governors are ambitious for the school and understand its strengths and weaknesses. They regularly monitor the progress of improvement areas, pupils' outcomes and teachers' performance.
- Our new Early Years leader has a clear vision of how to improve the quality of the provision and good routines are now in place.
- Directors from Venturers Trust are providing clear support to the school.



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Whilst there is much to be proud of, we must also take account of the specific areas where the report notes a requirement to improve, including:

- Inconsistent quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Not all pupils are achieving expected standards in reading, phonics and maths.
- Lesson plans are not always sufficiently adapted to challenge the most able pupils.
- In Early Years, boys under achieve and resources reflecting the school's cultural diversity are limited.

Those of you who attended our recent parent meetings about our Academy Improvement Plan will recognise that the plans that we had already made over the summer reflect the development areas that the inspectors highlighted. At these meetings, we also covered the many different ways that you can help us on our journey. A copy of the presentation material from these meetings is available on our website, or from the school office.

Our plans include many measures to improve teaching and learning, where a full monitoring system is now in place to ensure that teaching is of the high standard that we expect. Whilst the inspectors noted that behaviour is generally good, we have put in place additional measures to reinforce good behaviour, both in and out of class, to ensure that this does not distract our pupils from their learning.

We are also actively strengthening the school's relationship with parents and carers through increased information sharing via the new website; encouraging you to spend time in school for open mornings, celebration of work days and the reading café; and we have launched the 'Parents Academy Improvement Group'.

Barton Hill Academy is making full use of the benefits we have as part of a very supportive Trust, sponsored by the Society of Merchant Venturers and the University of Bristol. We have the dedicated expertise of the Trust's Academy Improvement Director who is in school for two days each week and the Director of Primary Education, who is with us for one day each week. As well as making significant financial investment in the school, Venturers Trust provides hands-on, practical support, including access to enhanced resources, shared central services and cross-Trust learning. This, combined with our active and effective Governors, our strong leadership team and our talented team of enthusiastic teachers, provides us with a wealth of resource and experience to develop and implement the necessary improvements.

We attach a copy of the full report, which will also be available on the Ofsted website from Thursday 19th October and accessible via the link on our new school website. We understand that you may have questions or comments once you have reflected on this letter and the report, and we welcome you to share these with us. There will be a parent meeting on Monday 30th October at 9am in the school to allow all parents the opportunity to ask questions and be assured that we are taking all steps necessary to make Barton Hill Academy an amazing school.

Our commitment to provide children with the strongest foundation for learning remains as firm as ever and we are confident that the significant improvements already made, combined with the new objectives and initiatives that we have outlined in our Academy Improvement Plan, will ensure that Barton Hill Academy provides the very best education for our children.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Emma Tovey
Interim Principal

Ms Gail Bragg
Chair of Governors