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7 February 2014

Mr Nathan Thomas
The Headteacher
Medina College
Fairlee Road
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 2DX

Dear Mr Thomas

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Medina College

Following my visit to your school on 6 February 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

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

Evidence

Inspectors gathered a range of evidence including:

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

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

behaviour and safety require improvement.

Context

Medina College is a large 11–18 secondary school. A very small proportion of its students are from minority ethnic groups and only a few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students who are disabled or have special educational needs is average. A relatively large proportion is entitled to free schools meals. A typical percentage of students join or leave the school at times other than at the start of Year 7 or the end of Year 11. The school is fully staffed.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour still requires improvement, but it has improved in the past 12 months. Students acknowledge and appreciate the improvements, but also recognise the remaining variability in behaviour between lessons.

Most students arrive punctually to school, but a significant minority are late. This makes for a rather ragged start to the day. Lessons usually start punctually; most students move quickly when they hear the five-minute warning bell. A few are slow to move and lack sufficient urgency, although they do as they are asked when told to move to their lessons by teachers. The end of the day is well managed and it runs smoothly. This is particularly important as most students leave by bus.

Students say that they feel safe and happy in school. They get on well together and say very clearly that bullying is not a major issue, that any incidents are followed up rigorously and that the school takes a strict line when necessary. They also say that such things as racist language are very rare and not tolerated by staff. Older students say that there are now fewer disagreements. Many students who spoke to me had moved from other schools on the island. All said that they liked the school and felt that other students had welcomed and readily accepted them.

The vast majority of students behave well as they move around the school and at break and lunchtime. Although leaders do everything that they can to ensure the smooth flow of students, corridors are narrow and inevitably become congested. Despite this, people move around sensibly, with appropriate consideration for others. There is occasional horseplay and noisy behaviour, but students settle down quickly when teachers tell them to stop. Students told me that there used to be a lot of poor behaviour at break and lunchtime, with people running around corridors, 'barging' each other, throwing food around and breaking windows. They say that such things are now very rare. Most students wear uniform correctly and smartly, although a small minority push the boundaries by removing their ties or wearing trainers or hoodies.

The headteacher sets high standards for behaviour in the school. He challenges any inappropriate behaviour, for example students in incorrect uniform or moving slowly to lessons. He clearly models and demonstrates what is expected of other staff; most also challenge and correct students authoritatively and effectively. Some, however, do not challenge, or they do so ineffectually, for example by half-heartedly telling students to move to their lessons without insisting or checking that they do.

Behaviour in classrooms has also improved in the past year, although there is still some variability between lessons. Serious misbehaviour is now rare, although some lessons are still disrupted by a few students. Students are typically cooperative and good natured, responding positively to teachers and teaching assistants. They support each other and work well together in pairs and groups. Most have positive attitudes to learning and higher ability students typically have very good attitudes. However, a minority lack enthusiasm and do not push themselves to achieve as much as they could. This is exacerbated when the work is too easy, as it is in some lessons. On occasion, some teachers' expectations of behaviour and attitudes are too low. These teachers are too accepting when students work slowly or drift off task and start to chat.

The current guidelines for managing misbehaviour in the classroom are too complicated. The system is not used well and teachers across the school do not, therefore, respond consistently to minor classroom incidents. Leaders have recognised this. They have already done much good work to develop new procedures which are to be introduced later this term.

Good systems are in place to enable staff to record information about students' behaviour. Leaders analyse this information carefully and make good use of it, for example to see if there are patterns of misbehaviour in particular subjects, lessons or at specific times of the day. They take effective action to bring about improvements where necessary, for example by changing groupings or teachers.

Attendance, which was low, has improved dramatically.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that all students arrive punctually to school.
- Ensure that staff consistently and effectively challenge minor misbehaviour, slow movement to lessons and incorrect uniform.
- Ensure that all teachers have sufficiently high expectations of behaviour and attitudes in lessons.
- Complete and introduce the new guidelines for managing behaviour in the classroom and then check carefully to ensure that all staff follow them consistently.

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

Yours sincerely

Christopher Russell
Her Majesty's Inspector