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Richard Williams  
Headteacher  
Medina College  
Fairlee Road  
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Isle of Wight  
PO30 2DX

Dear Mr Williams

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Medina College**

Following my visit to your school on 15 October 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in March 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its section 5 inspection before the one that took place in March 2015, the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders, representatives of the governing body and a group of middle leaders, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. I visited several classrooms with you, where I talked to students and looked at their work. I evaluated a range of documentation including the college action plan and governors' minutes.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection, two new teachers have been appointed to share the leadership for mathematics. An assistant headteacher is temporarily leading the English department, while the head of department is on maternity leave. A head of humanities has been appointed temporarily. The leaders of English and science have taken on wider leadership roles for these subjects across the two federated schools.

## **Main findings**

You are taking purposeful action to tackle the areas for improvement. 2015 GCSE examination results do not show an upturn from 2014, although have yet to be finalised after appeals to examination boards. The school action plan has clear objectives linked to the right priorities. The plan sets out helpful measures of success, and leaders frequently review progress and adapt actions appropriately. As a result, the drive to become a good school is maintained effectively.

Leaders undertake a range of monitoring activities frequently, including looking at students' books and visiting lessons. This helps leaders to have an accurate view of the quality of teaching. Leaders use this information carefully, to match support to where it is needed most. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving. Teachers have worked well together to improve their use of questioning in lessons. Consequently, in the best practice, teachers ensure carefully targeted questions move learning on more rapidly. For example, in a Year 9 mathematics lesson, the teacher persistently challenged students to explain square route calculations, thoughtfully adapting his questions to test students' differing levels of understanding.

You expect middle leaders to take more responsibility for driving improvements and monitoring progress in their areas. Many of them embrace this level of challenge. However, the impact of some of these leaders is inconsistent because of their different levels of skill and experience. You appreciate this is a priority to address for the college to continue to improve. The newly formed college leadership team is providing a useful forum for middle leaders to share ideas and shape a consistent approach to improvement.

The development of students' literacy skills is a key area for improvement. The library has been restocked with thousands of new books. This means students have access to a wider variety of reading material, and they are using the library more often. College staff identify gaps in students' literacy skills while they are still in primary school, so that bespoke and intensive support can be provided rapidly when students join the college. Teachers often identify and correct students' mistakes in spelling, punctuation and grammar in a range of subjects. The college's assessment information shows students' literacy skills are improving.

The quality of teachers' feedback to students is developing well. Teachers use assessment information more effectively to fill gaps in students' knowledge and understanding. Students increasingly use time in lessons to review and improve their work in the light of feedback from their teachers.

Leaders have raised expectations for the setting and completion of homework. Better systems for checking this process show improvements in the quality and quantity of homework being completed by students. Staff and parents appreciate the ease with which they can find out what homework has been set.

You have reviewed and refined the college's behaviour policy. Consequently, the process for dealing with incidents of poor behaviour is simpler and applied more consistently and fairly. During my visit, students were engaged and focused on their work. However, exclusion rates remain too high. Leaders and governors are aware of the need to address this and plans are in place to provide an alternative to sending students home for less serious incidents of unacceptable behaviour.

The addition of two new governors has further strengthened the level of skill and expertise of the governing body. As a result of effective training by the local authority adviser, governors are rightly drawing up detailed plans to monitor the college's progress against each of the key priorities for improvement. Governors have a clear understanding of what the college needs to do to improve further and are determined to play their part.

Ofsted may carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

Senior leaders have an effective working relationship with the local authority. The local authority has a secure grasp of the college's strengths and areas for development. Local authority advisers have provided valuable support, especially to the leaders for English, mathematics and science. Appropriately, senior leaders plan to continue to draw on support and training offered by the local authority in the future.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Hampshire.

Yours sincerely

Lisa Moore

**Her Majesty's Inspector**