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Karen Begley  
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Dear Miss Begley

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

Following my visit to your school on 26 January 2017, 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 second 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.

The school should take further action to:

- increase the rigour of monitoring and robustly evaluate improvements to teaching, learning and assessment by their impact on pupils' progress
- strengthen school improvement plans by adding measurable milestones which governors can use to evaluate the impact of actions taken by school leaders.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the executive headteacher, head of school, other senior leaders and middle leaders and members of the governing body to discuss actions taken since the last inspection. I spoke to a representative of the local authority by telephone. I reviewed some pupils' work with two leaders. You accompanied me on a brief visit to a number of lessons around the school. I evaluated a range of documents, including your self-evaluation and improvement plans.

## **Context**

The previous headteacher of Medina College left the school at the end of June 2016. In July, the headteacher of Carisbrooke College became executive headteacher of the three schools within the Island Innovation Federation: Medina College, Carisbrooke College and the Sixth Form Campus. In September, one of the previous deputy headteachers became head of school and the responsibilities of other senior leaders were adjusted. Another deputy headteacher from Medina College changed role to lead the joint sixth form provision.

## **Main findings**

School leaders have built on the improvements noted during the first monitoring inspection which took place in October 2015. Re-organisation of the roles and responsibilities of the senior leadership team in September 2016 provided impetus for further improvement. The executive headteacher has a strategic role and you, as head of school, are responsible for the day-to-day running of the school. You, together with senior and middle leaders, have welcomed the opportunity to work more closely with colleagues from Carisbrooke and local authority advisers. There is a greater culture of openness and collaboration throughout the school, which has helped to increase the pace of improvement in teaching and learning.

In September you launched a new assessment system which provides information about the expected progression of pupils from Years 7 to 11 in every subject. These progression ladders are used by teachers to plan lessons and by pupils to see the next stages in their learning. Leaders have not yet gathered enough information to analyse the impact of this new methodology.

A revised feedback policy outlines expectations of teachers to provide precise advice to pupils about how to improve their work and how pupils are expected to act on this advice. Your monitoring information suggests that these expectations are being implemented; however, there are some inconsistencies, which I also noted when reviewing pupils' work. During my visits to classrooms the atmosphere was generally purposeful and pupils were appropriately involved in a range of activities. In drama and mathematics lessons it was clear that the pupils knew what was expected of them and they were using assessment guidance to help them progress well.

Following the previous inspection, leaders set out to improve reading with determination. The library was stocked with very many more books and a librarian was appointed in September. She has improved the use of a structured reading scheme and worked closely with the English department to develop reading journals. This work is still at an early stage. Early signs are positive, with pupils reading more, but the full impact is not yet evident.

Middle leaders are positive about changes which have taken place in the school since September. The pastoral system was re-organised from 'houses', with pupils from all years mixed in tutor groups, to a year-group system. Both pastoral and subject leaders report that this has brought benefits, particularly regarding academic mentoring and age-related interventions. Middle leaders appreciate their increased levels of responsibility and accountability for implementing improvement within the school.

In September, leaders also relaunched the school's behaviour policy with increased clarity about consequences for poor behaviour. Your tracking shows that behaviour in lessons has improved and fewer pupils were excluded in the autumn term. School leaders work hard to support the most vulnerable pupils. The 'Wave' provision provides significant support for groups of pupils most at risk of underachievement and is increasingly successful. The industrious 'fast track' team is successfully identifying and plugging learning gaps and helping pupils who need to catch up to do so.

Overall attendance at the school has improved a little, but school leaders are not checking the levels of attendance and persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils. Attendance by disadvantaged pupils was low during 2015–16.

Improvements made throughout the school during the first year following the inspection had a positive impact on the 2016 outcomes for Year 11. The proportions of Year 11 pupils who achieved at least a GCSE grade C in both English and mathematics was higher than 2015, but still well below national levels. The progress made by disadvantaged pupils shows wide gaps in their achievement compared with other pupils nationally with the same starting points. Leaders have prioritised the need to improve the performance of disadvantaged pupils and there is a sharp focus on pupils in Year 11. Leaders are able to describe in detail examples of successful interventions for individual pupils, but there is limited information about the progress of groups of pupils across the school, including disadvantaged pupils.

Pupils from Medina and Carisbrooke Colleges are taught together in the separate Sixth Form Campus. This provision has improved since the leadership re-organisation in September. The new head of sixth form has tightened the day-to-day operation and introduced better systems for gathering information about students' attendance and progress. Students now have mentors to help support them with their studies and personal development. The school's tracking

information shows that currently students are making progress in line with similar students nationally in many, but not all, subjects. There is limited monitoring of teaching and learning by subject leaders with responsibility for sixth form performance, most of whom are based at Medina College. Although improvements are underway, there is scope for strengthened monitoring and more rigorous evaluation of this 16 to 19 provision.

A single governing body is responsible for all three provisions in the federation. Since the previous inspection, the governing body has been strengthened by the addition of new members with helpful skills, expertise and experience. Since the leadership re-organisation in September, the governing body has worked more productively with school leadership teams. There is evidence of greater challenge by governors and they have the capacity to hold leaders to account effectively as well as providing appropriate support. However, governors' ability to fully evaluate the impact of leaders' actions is hampered by the lack of milestone information about pupils' progress towards meeting success criteria.

The governors' decision to promote the headteacher of Carisbrooke College to the post of executive headteacher has been instrumental in enabling improvements in all three provisions in the federation. His determined, personable and effective leadership has promoted much greater openness and collaboration between staff at Carisbrooke and Medina Colleges and he has sensibly welcomed support by Hampshire local authority advisers. Much has been achieved in the first four months of this new leadership arrangement.

In summary, faster improvement is now taking place at Medina College, but there is still much to do. Leaders have carried out a range of actions to address most of the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection in March 2015. Since then, the school's own self-evaluation has rightly identified some emerging strengths and other areas of concern. School improvement plans have become overloaded with tasks. Leaders, including governors, now need to re-evaluate the school's current position and focus sharply on the actions necessary to sustain improvements and address remaining weaknesses.

### **External support**

School leaders and teachers are benefiting from effective support by advisers from Hampshire local authority who have played an important role in driving improvements at the school. The link adviser offers appropriate challenge and support and subject advisers are helping to improve leadership, teaching and learning across the curriculum, particularly in mathematics. The mathematics department is also participating in a project to improve teaching and learning for subject leaders and teachers across the Isle of Wight. Senior and middle leaders report very positively about their work with a range of local authority advisers, who have helped leaders to develop their thinking and implement new systems. Support provided has been at both strategic and practical levels and advisers have modelled

good practice. The local authority has recently brokered additional support from a teaching school on the mainland.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for the Isle of Wight. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Theresa Phillips  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**