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Karen Begley
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Dear Miss Begley

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Carisbrooke College

Following my remote inspection with Louise Walker, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 3 and 4 February 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken to provide education to all pupils during the current circumstances.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 (2) of the Education Act 2005 (as amended) and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for visiting schools while routine inspections remain temporarily suspended. It was additional to the usual monitoring process for schools that are judged to require improvement.

Following changes to government guidance and the imposition of COVID-19 (coronavirus) lockdown restrictions, this monitoring inspection was carried out remotely. As such, the range of evidence available to inspectors was narrower than would normally be the case during an on-site inspection. As a result, this letter provides a more limited level of assurance than our usual monitoring reports.

The inspection took place because the school has received three successive judgements of requires improvement. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in December 2019.

Having considered all the evidence and taking into account the impact of COVID-19 on the school, I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action to provide education in the current circumstances.

Context

- Since the previous inspection, one governor and seven teachers have left the school, and two governors and eight teachers have joined.
- No pupils needed to work remotely last term.
- At the time of this inspection, nearly one tenth of pupils were being educated on site. Of those pupils attending on site, nearly half were vulnerable pupils and a third were pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Approximately one third of pupils with SEND who have education, health and care plans were attending school on site, including in the Einstein Centre, a specialist unit for pupils with autism spectrum disorder.

Main findings

- You have maintained the momentum of improvement since the previous inspection. This demonstrates your ambition and determination to make sure pupils receive a good education despite all of the challenges over the last year.
- Developing the quality of the curriculum has been central to this. Leaders and teachers introduced a newly designed and organised curriculum in September 2020 across the range of subjects. This included changing key stage 3 so it lasts three years instead of two. You have made sure that reading and the improvement of pupils' vocabulary are important seams running through every subject. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, however, your plans to improve provision for pupils' personal development have not progressed as rapidly.
- Teachers are now aiming to build pupils' knowledge in carefully sequenced ways, as well as increasing the breadth and depth of what pupils learn. When pupils returned in September, subject leaders and teachers adapted their plans to help pupils catch up with missed learning.
- You have not allowed the current national lockdown to disrupt the delivery of the curriculum. For example, Year 11 pupils are studying the subjects and content that they usually would. Although the majority of pupils are working at home, they are learning exactly the same things as those pupils attending school on site.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils have not dipped this term. Pupils are expected to follow their normal timetable and to work just as hard. Equally, teachers continue to check pupils' work, giving pupils useful advice about how they can improve.

- Most pupils are engaging consistently well with education, whether learning on site or at home. Engagement is particularly strong among certain groups of pupils, noticeably pupils with SEND. Some pupils are thriving. All pupils have at least daily contact with school. For vulnerable pupils, there is additional contact to make sure they are supported effectively. Leaders know who the pupils are whose engagement is weaker, including some Year 11 pupils, and are taking action to remedy this.
- You are determined that pupils will not lose out because of the disruption to their education. Certain pupils, many of them disadvantaged pupils, returned to school last September having fallen further behind than most other pupils at the school. Leaders rightly put a range of support in place for them, including specific help with their reading. You know that it is vital that they do not fall further behind now. Although you have plans in place to do so, you have not yet evaluated the impact of this additional support to see what is working and what might need changing.
- Leaders are making sure that pupils with SEND receive individual support on a daily basis from a dedicated team of learning support assistants, as well as the contact they have with their teachers. Pupils also receive appropriate specialist help, for example speech and language therapy. Leaders ensure that those pupils who benefit most attend school on site, including in the Einstein Centre.
- Governors have an accurate understanding of the school's priorities and what leaders are doing to address them. They monitor and evaluate improvements, challenging leaders about the effectiveness of their actions. Accountability appears sharp.
- Leaders make good use of the support offered by Hampshire local authority. They value the level of challenge and quality of advice they receive, which is particularly helpful in providing an accurate picture of the school's progress. As part of this support, leaders have recently secured some additional help with further developing reading and the curriculum. Leaders report a range of other benefits of the support, including access to very useful networks for subject leaders.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We held meetings with you, the executive headteacher, other senior leaders, three governors (including the two co-chairs of the governing body), the special educational needs coordinator, staff who lead and manage the Einstein Centre, a number of subject leaders and a representative of Hampshire local authority to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also spoke to two groups of pupils, looked at examples of pupils' work and observed sections of recordings of 12 lessons.

I am copying this letter to the co-chairs 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

Matthew Haynes
Her Majesty's Inspector