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Matthew Parr-Burman
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Dear Mr Parr-Burman

Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Medina College

Following my remote inspection with Aimee Floyd, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 24 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.

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 four successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in January 2020.

Having considered all the evidence and taking into account the impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus) 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.

Leaders and those responsible for governance should take further action to:

- fully implement the school's plans to promote reading, including:
 - establishing the school's literacy policy across the curriculum
 - making better use of the school library resources to help all pupils enjoy reading for pleasure
 - ensuring that pupils at an early stage of reading get the specific help they need.

Context

- Since the section 5 inspection in January 2020, nine teachers have left the school and ten have been appointed. One governor has left the governing body and two have been appointed.
- During the autumn term 2020, a very small number of individual pupils had to work from home.
- At the time of this inspection, nearly all pupils were being educated at home, with a small group of pupils attending on site. Just under one quarter of the school's vulnerable pupils and those with education, health and care plans were learning on site.

Main findings

- Leaders and governors were well-prepared for the partial school closure in January 2021. They had sensibly taken advantage of the earlier lockdown to adapt their existing curriculum plans. Staff were trained thoroughly in the use of digital technology, and leaders made sure that pupils had the necessary equipment to access lessons when working from home. As a result, pupils have benefited from a relatively smooth continuation of their education.
- At the time of the section 5 inspection in January 2020, senior and faculty leaders had made a positive start to developing a broader and more ambitious curriculum. Leaders have continued to review their plans, while responding swiftly to what assessment of pupils is telling them. Leaders and teachers are now at the stage of thinking more deeply about what they teach, when they teach it and how to ensure that pupils learn and remember more.
- Until recently, the proportion of vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) attending on site had been too low. Understandably, some families were alarmed at the rapid increase in the number of COVID-19 cases on the island and were hesitant about sending their children to school when the lockdown began. However, at the time of the inspection, leaders were taking a firm but sensitive line with reluctant attenders to get them ready for the school's full reopening. Numbers of pupils working on site have increased.

- Pupils attending on site follow the same curriculum as those learning at home. Although they can directly contact staff supervising their lessons, most pupils prefer to message their own teacher through the 'chat' facility. Pupils with SEND have extra support, whether they are at home or on site. As numbers on site have increased, staff have wisely planned more bespoke programmes to help integrate pupils back into school.
- Leaders' plans to raise the profile of reading have slowed during the pandemic. Leaders want to improve the school's library resources and guidance for pupils, particularly those in key stage 3. Plans are in place to promote reading across all subjects and ensure that struggling readers get the intensive help they need. School leaders agreed with inspectors that promoting reading and improving literacy are an urgent priority.
- Staff and governors are acutely aware of how important it is to prepare Year 11 and Year 13 pupils for the next stage of their education. Staff have kept these pupils on track through maintaining study and assessment routines, nurturing their mental health and focusing on career plans.
- Staff's knowledge of pupils with SEND is matched by a strong sense of responsibility for their well-being. Many staff have clearly gone 'above and beyond' to work closely with particular families. Every pupil with an education, health and care plan benefits from regular, if not daily, contact with their dedicated teaching assistant on site and when working at home. Specialist support, such as speech and language therapy, has not stopped during the restrictions.
- Governors know the school's current priorities and have closely monitored what the school has provided since the start of the pandemic. Governors helpfully stepped up communication with senior and faculty leaders, listening and providing reassurance. Governors ask searching questions about remote and on-site education. They check that leaders know not only that pupils are accessing remote education, but also progressing through the curriculum.
- The school benefits from collaborative work across the federation. Leaders' and governors' oversight of both secondary schools has sustained curriculum improvements and kept aspirations high. School leaders and teachers value the support provided by the local authority advisory team. A partnership with a mainland secondary school has led directly to improvements in science. The school improvement partner knows the school and federation well. She supports senior leaders' drive and ambition and has continued to provide challenging insights during the pandemic and as the school looks to the future.

Evidence

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, senior leaders across the federation, governors and the local authority adviser to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown. We spoke to groups of pupils who were attending school on site.

We also reviewed the updated school improvement plan, documentation related to the work of governors and your survey of staff and parents. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 45 free-text responses and 110 staff questionnaire returns.

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

Janet Pearce
Her Majesty's Inspector