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26 April 2021

Andrew Davis  
Principal  
Exmouth Community College  
Gipsy Lane  
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Devon  
EX8 3AF

Dear Mr Davis

### **Additional, remote monitoring inspection of Exmouth Community College**

Following my remote inspection with Sarah McGinnis, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), of your school on 23 March 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 two successive judgements of requires improvement. The school's most recent section 5 inspection took place in February 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:

- ensure that leaders and teachers develop expertise in the principles of curriculum design
- ensure that curriculum plans are coherently sequenced, making clear what pupils must learn and how knowledge builds over time.

### **Context**

- Since the last inspection, four members of staff have joined the senior leadership team. There is now an assistant principal leading each phase: key stage 3, key stage 4 and post-16.
- Across the spring term, approximately 95% of pupils were educated at home when the school was closed to most pupils. Approximately 50% of vulnerable pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), attended on site.
- At the time of this inspection, 90% of pupils were attending school. One 'bubble' of Year 8 pupils was being educated remotely, for a period of self isolation.

### **Main findings**

- The school has shown resolve, overcoming many challenges in the last year. Leaders ensured that all pupils had the technology, materials and support to learn when at home. The actions taken meant that all pupils were, and continue to be, provided with an education in the current circumstances. Leaders have planned a gradual transition back into school now that it has fully reopened, prioritising pupils' well-being and individual needs. Plans for Year 11 aim to provide a taster of future courses.
- Leaders at all levels are aware of the importance of the curriculum and have invested significant time in training and developing curriculum plans. However, these plans are not clear enough. In all subject areas, leaders have not clearly defined the specific knowledge pupils must remember in the long term. In addition, leaders have not ensured that this knowledge is coherently sequenced across each phase of the school. You are aware of this and have taken action to address this after the Easter break.
- Teachers check pupils' learning and provide feedback regularly. Many subject areas use quick quizzes to check what pupils know and can do. Leaders have not yet considered what assessments are telling them and used this information to inform their next steps in planning the curriculum.
- Leaders have ensured that the needs of pupils with SEND are met. Leaders have a good understanding of the best ways to support these pupils and

share this information with teachers as appropriate. However, there are inconsistencies. Some parents feel that the support is varied across different subject areas.

- Leaders have reviewed behaviour policies and routines in light of COVID-19, ensuring that pupils and staff are safe. These routines have been well adopted by all teachers, leading to better consistency at the start of lessons.
- Pupils are proud of their school and pleased to be back on site. They are positive and appreciative of the continued support and the opportunity to learn.
- Leaders have taken steps to ensure that communication with parents is frequent and informative. As a result, parents are complimentary of the hard work and care of school leaders and teachers.
- Governors care deeply about the school and are taking effective action to assure themselves that all pupils receive an appropriate education in the current circumstances. They are working well with senior leaders and staff to continue to bring about further improvement.

## **Evidence**

This inspection was conducted remotely. We spoke to you, other senior leaders, pupils, curriculum leaders and representatives of those responsible for governance to discuss leaders' actions to provide education to all pupils during a national lockdown.

We also reviewed curriculum plans, recovery plans and governors' minutes. We looked at responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including 240 free-text responses, and 159 staff questionnaires.

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

Yours sincerely

Jen Gibbs  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**