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2 July 2021

Ian Brierly  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Brierly

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Paget High School**

Following my visit to your school on 24 June 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the monitoring inspection 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 improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received three successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. I discussed the impact of the pandemic with you and have taken that into account in my evaluation.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

### **Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action in order for the school to become a good school.**

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that music returns to the school's curriculum and that learning in this subject matches the aims of the national curriculum
- improve pupils' reading and writing skills by accurately identifying the gaps in their literacy and providing them with the right support to help close these gaps quickly.

## **Context**

Since the previous inspection, a new special educational needs and disabilities coordinator (SENDCo) was appointed in October 2020. An additional governor has also joined the school's governing body. You have recently appointed a new head of English, who will start in September 2021.

During this inspection, you had 49 Year 8 pupils self-isolating due to a positive case of COVID-19. Other pupils in Year 7 and Year 8 have also had periods of self-isolation this term.

## **Main findings**

Despite the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, leaders and governors have maintained their focus on school improvement. They have continued to work on the school's curriculum and strengthening individual subjects. You have also looked to improve other aspects of the school's work. For example, a new behaviour policy was introduced before the first national lockdown. This has been subsequently refined so that staff and pupils are clear about what is expected of them.

Leaders have also improved their work around attendance. A new attendance officer was appointed in December 2019, who meets regularly with families at risk of persistent absence. This support continued during the periods of national restrictions and included making home visits to vulnerable pupils. This support helped to ensure that most pupils returned to school when it fully reopened.

To improve the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), you appointed a new SENDCo, who is now part of your senior leadership team. Staff have received training on supporting pupils with SEND, for example how to support pupils' behavioural needs effectively. The new SENDCo has put in place 'pupil passports' to identify the barriers in their learning. They also contain strategies that can support teachers in the classroom in overcoming pupils' barriers. Leaders have already begun to look at how teaching assistants can provide more effective support to pupils. As a result of this work, teachers feel more confident in being able to provide the right support to pupils with SEND to help them make better progress.

You are clear about the steps the school has already taken to improve the curriculum. Leaders have conducted a review of each subject to ensure topics are sequenced effectively so that pupils can build on prior learning. Most subjects have now completed a 'learning journey', which shows what topics will be taught by the end of each year. Leaders recognise that the COVID-19 pandemic has hampered teachers' ability to fully implement all aspects of the curriculum and leaders' ability to provide quality assurance of all changes that have been made.

Leaders have improved the curriculum in English and science. You quickly recognised that some topics were not challenging enough to help prepare pupils for future learning. In English, you have introduced more challenging texts and reordered topics so that pupils are able to build and deepen their knowledge and understanding. In science, leaders have put in place a key stage 3 curriculum where pupils study aspects of biology, chemistry and physics under a thematic title. Early signs indicate that pupils are benefiting from improvements in these subjects.

Leaders recognise that there is still more work to do on the curriculum. At the moment, pupils do not study music. You have plans in place to offer some music experience from September 2021. However, it is less clear how this will meet the aims of the national curriculum.

Leaders are aware of pupils' low prior attainment when they arrive at school. Checks take place in Year 7 to identify the gaps pupils have in their literacy. Leaders have also looked to build key vocabulary into lessons to help pupils with subject-specific knowledge. Some pupils in key stage 3 have an additional hour of literacy to help improve their reading and writing skills. However, this time is not being used well enough to help improve these skills. Leaders recognise that further work is required to strengthen the support pupils receive to address gaps in their reading and writing skills to help them catch up.

Year 11 pupils have been supported well since finishing their GCSE courses. Pupils who will be joining the school's sixth form are currently part of a five-week transition programme. This has included a combination of team challenges and key stage 5 taster lessons. For those pupils who will be leaving the school at the end of this academic year, remote learning materials have been provided through the school's website.

### **Additional support**

The school has benefited from the support it has received from a local multi-academy trust. Senior leaders from the trust and the school have met to identify what support can be offered. The trust has conducted a review of the school's provision for pupils with SEND and suggested ways in which it can improve its offer further.

The school has also received support commissioned by the local authority. It has provided support on special educational needs and has conducted staff training, albeit remotely, during the last year.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, pupils, staff and representatives of those responsible for governance to discuss the

actions taken since the last inspection. A telephone call was also held with a representative of the local authority.

I also looked at curriculum plans and information on the school's website. I evaluated responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 56 free-text responses, and 62 staff questionnaires.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Howes  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**