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13 July 2021

Matthew Larminie  
Headteacher  
The Mandeville School  
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Buckinghamshire  
HP21 8ES

Dear Mr Larminie

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to The Mandeville School**

Following my visit to your school on 22 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 two 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:

- fully embed the planned improvements to the school's curriculum, ensuring each subject has a clear sequence and coherence from Year 7 to Year 13
- implement the ambitious plans to establish a culture of reading in the school
- continue to implement the recent improvements in supporting pupils' positive behaviour to ensure the ongoing reduction in behavioural incidents and to minimise disruption to learning.

## **Context**

There have been significant changes in the leadership of the school since the last section 5 inspection. The acting headteacher (appointed September 2020) was appointed substantive headteacher in May 2021. There have also been other changes at senior and middle leadership level. The chair of the governing body was elected in March 2020. A further governor joined the governing body in February 2021.

Over the past term, governors and senior leaders have completed the consultation process with stakeholders regarding their plans for academisation. These plans have been submitted to the Department for Education.

At the time of this inspection, Years 11 and 13 pupils were not attending their usual lessons. To support the Year 11 pupils, leaders were actively working with schools and colleges across the local area to assist the transition to sixth form. This included some face-to-face sessions, as well as online activities. Year 13 students were also receiving advice and guidance to support their next steps to university or employment.

## **Main findings**

You, your governors and your leadership team have a clear vision of the improvements required to ensure Mandeville becomes a good school. You have focused on implementing specific systems and processes that are benefiting staff and pupils. Your plans for improvement have continued, despite the disruption from the pandemic. These plans are thoughtful, with appropriate priorities identified.

Everyone recognises that the expectations of what pupils can and will achieve have risen. This is seen in the curriculum planning that is being put in place across all areas. Pupils can now study a much broader range of academic subjects at key stage 4 and in the sixth form. The improving curriculum is underpinned by better assessment that is starting to help teachers identify gaps in knowledge quickly. This was particularly important over the past term as pupils have been supported in their return from the recent period of remote education. While this is yet to be fully embedded across the whole curriculum, you know which subjects need much greater attention to ensure knowledge is clearly sequenced. This will ensure that pupils build a coherent understanding within each subject that they can confidently explain and apply.

You have ambitious plans to develop a love of reading across the school. This includes the improvement of the school's library, as well as working with teachers to ensure reading supports wider learning across the curriculum. This will further enhance the interventions that are already in place to help the weakest readers in the school learn to read confidently and fluently. The special educational needs coordinator has prioritised this support since the school fully reopened in March

2021. This provision works alongside the individual plans in place that identify and help to meet the needs of all pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities.

The higher expectations for learning can also be seen in the newly introduced systems to improve behaviour and attendance. Staff and pupils are clear on the consequences for poor behaviour but recognise that there is more to do to ensure consistent positive attitudes to learning across the school.

Pupils are very positive about the improvements that have been made to the school over the past year. They appreciate the support and guidance they were given during the recent period of remote education and since they returned to school. Pupils talk about their achievements with pride. The discussions I had during the inspection highlighted how much pupils are encouraged to value the diversity in the school and to listen and respect each other's views.

Governors are united by a moral purpose that is focused on providing pupils and the local community with an improving school that provides a good education. Training and support from other local leaders and the local authority have strengthened governors' support given to you and your senior leaders. The effectiveness of this work is regularly evaluated as part of the school's journey of improvement.

### **Additional support**

You have worked closely with Buckinghamshire local authority to secure appropriate support and training. Additional assistance has been provided by leaders and teachers from other schools within the local area. This has focused specifically on the identified areas of school improvement. Staff value this guidance and talk positively about the impact this has already had in improving the school's curriculum. In addition, particular advice has been provided by the local pupil referral unit that leaders feel is helping a small group of pupils improve the management of their behaviour.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, other senior leaders, pupils, staff and representatives of those responsible for governance to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also held a virtual discussion with representatives from the local authority. I considered various school documents, including the school's improvement plans.

I had discussions with pupils and staff, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. I considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 33 free-text responses. I also took account of 59 staff questionnaires and spoke with staff.

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

Yours sincerely

Aimee Floyd  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**