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Dear Mrs Robson

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Ormiston Maritime Academy

Following my visit to your school on 30 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:

- take more effective action to improve attendance, especially among those groups of pupils where it is the lowest such as disadvantaged pupils
- develop the curriculum, so that in all subject areas the knowledge pupils need to acquire and retain is identified clearly and implemented consistently.

Context

Since the last inspection, four new governors have joined the local governing body, and one governor has left. Two new assistant principals took up posts in September 2020. You were appointed as principal in September 2019.

The school has suitable arrangements to provide remote learning if required. This ensures pupils still have access to the planned curriculum when not in school.

COVID-19 has restricted some areas of school improvement. Leaders maintained a focus on curriculum reform and planning, but the rate of implementation has been slowed. This means they have not been able to review the impact of the plans fully.

At the time of the inspection, all pupils in Year 10 were self-isolating due to COVID-19.

Main findings

You have a clear vision for the school which has been communicated to all staff. This has created a unified effort to deliver the school's plans for improvement. The plans for improvement are focused and coherent.

You have reviewed and changed the curriculum to ensure it increasingly meets the needs of the pupils. The changes to the school day have helped to ensure the curriculum is now broad and balanced. The curriculum gives pupils the opportunity to experience a wider range of subject areas. You have also changed the options process in Year 9. Pupils have more option choices and can select the full English baccalaureate group of subjects. This is keeping curriculum broader for longer for the pupils.

Subject plans in English and mathematics are well sequenced and thought out. They show the topic areas that will be covered. English and mathematics subject leaders have identified the knowledge they want pupils to know and remember. But, in other subjects, the identification of the knowledge pupils need to learn and remember is still developing.

Leaders have high aspirations for all pupils in the school, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Consideration is given to meeting the needs of pupils who struggle to manage their behaviour. Leaders make sure they are a full part of the school community when being supported.

Leaders and the trust have provided effective support to the school. They have provided relevant professional development for teachers and sustained leadership guidance for subject leaders over time.

During the inspection, I met with curriculum leaders and discussed the curriculum plans they now have in place. The curriculum is established in English and mathematics. In English, pupils explained the different characters in the book 'Animal Farm' and were able to give their own views on the Jane Eyre novel. In mathematics, pupils understood the division of quantities into two parts as a ratio. Also, in mathematics, learning was revisited and applied using concept corner sheets, where pupils used knowledge to answer different types of questions. Teachers' assessments of pupils' learning provide pupils with valuable next steps. Pupils could explain these next steps clearly.

Reading has been prioritised. Pupils are assessed and those who are not confident readers receive support. Leaders have started to develop expertise in phonics through working with a local school who has provided staff training.

The changes leaders have made to the behaviour policy are starting to make a difference but are not yet embedded. Pupils understand the behaviour system and spoke positively about the rewards they receive from staff. The importance of attendance is high profile across the school. Staff are working with pupils to explain the positive impact of good attendance. Leaders accept that attendance needs to improve further, particularly among disadvantaged pupils.

The school has a highly motivated team of leaders. This has helped the more effective implementation of the action plans.

Governors know the school well. They are focused on improving the school by strategically supporting and challenging leaders to offer pupils the best opportunities to succeed. They have a strong relationship with the school and are fully informed through detailed information provided by the principal. The governing body understands the need to monitor the impact of new plans.

Leaders are working at ways to improve communication with parents and use a variety of ways to share information. Parents are given different ways to communicate with the school.

Additional support

The trust has provided support and challenge for leaders in the school. They have monitored plans and given specific support to leaders, so they are able to fulfil their roles. The brokered reviews have provided valuable information to the school. This has helped leaders to plan and implement changes that are improving the quality of education pupils receive.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with the principal, the regional director of the trust, other senior leaders, pupils, curriculum leaders and governors to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I met with curriculum leaders from English, mathematics, science, humanities, modern foreign languages, and vocational studies. I visited lessons in English and mathematics. I also scrutinised the academy improvement plan and the academy self-evaluation document.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer of the Ormiston Academies Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for North East Lincolnshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Richard Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector