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Matthew Parr-Burman
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Dear Mr Parr-Burman

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Medina College

Following my visit to your school on 13 July 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 four 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 the school 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 curriculum leaders consistently monitor how teachers are implementing the curriculum, so pupils learn and remember more over time
- review and further develop provision for pupils' wider personal development to ensure pupils experience a worthwhile and high-quality programme

- fully implement the school's plans to promote reading, including ensuring that pupils at an early stage of reading get the specific help they need.

Context

Since the previous section 5 inspection in January 2020, leadership arrangements in the school have changed. In May 2020, the federation's executive headteacher became head of Medina College. He was previously head of the other school in the federation, Carisbrooke College. The federation's executive deputy headteacher became head of Carisbrooke College, having previously been head at Medina College.

Main findings

You and other senior leaders are working hard to improve the school. You have reviewed key stage 3 to ensure pupils now study a broad and balanced curriculum. You have also widened the range of subjects that pupils can study at key stage 4, introducing subjects such as health and social care.

Important work has taken place to construct a curriculum that is ambitious. You have provided time for leaders to further develop curriculum plans for each subject. These now include subject-specific vocabulary and opportunities for pupils to deepen their cultural understanding. Importantly, this is helping teachers have a deeper understanding of how to build pupils' knowledge and understanding over time. Many teachers consider how to deepen pupils' understanding more carefully. They now revisit key content to ensure that pupils' learning is secure. However, you have accurately identified that this varies. Curriculum leaders should continue to ensure that pupils learn consistently well across all subjects and classes.

You are now taking action to improve pupils' literacy and reading based on research and pupils' needs. Some actions have been hindered by the impact of the pandemic. For example, a reading programme for Year 7 pupils has been introduced but you have been unable to roll this out to the other year groups. For each subject, you have thought carefully about what training and support staff require. You propose this will be delivered in September, with the help of the local authority. Plans are also in place to ensure the learning support assistants receive phonics training. This will enable them to provide those pupils at an early stage of reading with the specific help they need.

You are firmly focused on improving pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Incidents of low-level disruption have decreased. Pupils now concentrate better in lessons. Pupils told me that behaviour in lessons is improving. Leaders have successfully raised levels of attendance.

Work is underway to improve pupils' personal development. Since the last inspection, you have introduced personal, social and health education as a subject all pupils study. This programme now meets statutory requirements. You and your senior leaders have thought carefully about how to build and strengthen pupils' talents, character and cultural understanding. You are in the process of mapping out how pupils can do this through their subjects and extra-curricular activities. Leaders are beginning to track pupils' engagement more carefully. However, this aspect of the school's improvement is at an early stage of development. You know that the next step is to think carefully about how to develop the current offer so that it includes the experiences pupils both want and need, to enable them to become active citizens.

Governors are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and priorities for further improvement. They use a rigorous process to assure themselves that what leaders tell them is accurate.

Additional support

Leaders make good use of the well-targeted support they receive from the local authority. This includes help to improve reading and the quality of the curriculum across a range of subjects. Your staff have also benefited from attending local subject development groups.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, senior leaders across the federation, governors and a representative from the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I reviewed a range of school documents, including the school's improvement plan. I made short visits to lessons, spoke to a group of teachers and met a group of pupils from Year 10 and Year 8. I looked at the 112 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 74 free-text responses and the 104 responses to the staff survey.

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 Isle of Wight. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Louise Walker
Her Majesty's Inspector