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Dear Miss Begley

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Carisbrooke College**

Following my visit to your school on 6 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 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 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:

- review and develop provision for pupils' wider personal development, evaluating the quality of personal, social and health education and taking account of pupils' needs within the local context

- build on recent useful work on the curriculum, so that all staff understand equally how knowledge is developed successfully across the five years that pupils are at the school.

## Context

Since the last inspection in December 2019, leadership arrangements in the school have changed. In May 2020, the federation's executive deputy headteacher became head of Carisbrooke College. She was previously head of the other school in the federation, Medina College. The executive headteacher is now head of Medina College.

During the first part of the pandemic in spring 2020, the Carisbrooke College site was closed. Vulnerable and key-worker pupils were accommodated at the Medina College site.

## Main findings

Since the last inspection, you have kept school improvement work focused on the right things. Developing the curriculum has been at the heart of this work. You have adapted how the overall curriculum is structured, giving younger pupils more time to study a broad range of subjects. You have also widened the range of subjects that pupils can study during key stage 4, introducing subjects, such as childcare, drama, French, business studies and fashion.

During the initial part of the pandemic, you made time for staff and leaders to think carefully about their subjects' curriculum. The school's wider leadership team has established a common set of expectations for subject planning. These expectations are helping to develop a shared understanding of where units of work fit within the big picture of what pupils learn over time. They are also helping you to be confident that all staff are thinking about how to promote literacy and cultural capital through medium-term planning. This work is better established in some subjects than in others. Some teaching staff are more connected than others to how learning is sequenced to build across the full five years that pupils are at Carisbrooke. Staff have varied levels of awareness about how learning over time in their subject provides pupils with the knowledge to move on successfully to post-16 study.

You have taken sensible steps to identify weaknesses in pupils' literacy. Your improvement plans are based soundly on this context and on proven research. Pupils now have more routine opportunities to engage with literature, such as through the introduction of shared reading as part of the tutor time programme. Staff now place a greater emphasis on understanding subject-specific vocabulary than in the in the past. Other planned actions have been slowed by the impact of the pandemic. For instance, while a reading programme has been introduced for

Year 7, its implementation was paused when the school partially closed for the first part of 2021. You have identified what training and support staff need around this aspect of school improvement. You note that this differs from subject to subject. Plans are in place for this work to commence in the autumn, supported by the local authority.

The school's work around pupils' personal development has taken a definite step forward since the last inspection. Personal, social and health education and religious education are now taught as explicit subjects. This assures you that these aspects of the curriculum are meeting statutory requirements. You are beginning to build a clearer picture of how pupils widen their cultural understanding via their subjects and extra-curricular activities. Some of the latter have been restricted while local restrictions have been in place during the pandemic. You are now starting to shift your focus beyond coverage and towards quality and pupil engagement. You have plans for how you will review what is currently in place, within and beyond the taught curriculum, taking staff and pupils' views into account. You are attuned to the school's local context, and the importance of engaging pupils in experiences beyond their life on the island. However, the personal development aspect of school improvement is earlier in its journey than the work you have done on the curriculum. In particular, you are yet to step back and reflect on what you have done and learned so far against the context of what you know that pupils need. You note that managing the challenges of sustaining education during the pandemic has slowed the pace of some of this work.

You and other leaders reflect an accurate sense of the improvement work needed and how far the school has travelled since the last inspection. Governors share this understanding, keeping themselves well informed about what is happening in the school. Leaders, staff and governors are equally committed to seeing the school get better.

### **Additional support**

The local authority provides ongoing and useful extra help to the school and the wider federation. Local authority officers have sustained this work during the pandemic, working with leaders to help with curriculum development. There is a commitment to continuing with this support moving forward. In particular, clear plans are in place to help faculties refine their practice and expertise around strengthening pupils' literacy. Some work has also been brokered with a local teaching school. However, this work is in the very early stages, having been impeded by the impact of COVID-19 on both schools.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the executive headteacher and executive deputy headteacher to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I looked at the school's central record of recruitment checks on staff. I spoke to a sample of senior leaders, faculty leaders, teachers and pupils. Together with the teaching and learning leader, I visited six lessons. I spoke separately with representatives of the governing body and the local authority. I took account of 80 responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including 32 received during the inspection. I also considered 51 free-text comments from parents and 64 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

Kathryn Moles  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**