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Mrs Marlene Littlefair
Principal
Hewens College
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Dear Mrs Littlefair

Requires improvement monitoring inspection of Hewens College

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 18 April 2024, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and took place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous graded (section 5) inspections.

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's overall effectiveness, but to identify and report on the school's progress. It is to highlight to the school and parents any improvements that school leaders have made since the school's previous graded inspection.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and other senior leaders, the chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust and other members of the trust the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I met with curriculum leaders for mathematics, history, English and music and visited a number of lessons in these subjects. I also met with leaders with responsibilities for reading, careers, attendance, and safeguarding. I met a range of pupils, including those with leadership responsibilities in the school. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to become good.

The school should take further action to:

- Ensure the strategies teachers use to check pupils' understanding and address misconceptions are routinely applied to enable the impact of the curriculum to be secure for all pupils.

Main findings

Since the previous inspection, you have developed a number of middle leaders which has added further leadership capacity to support the pastoral team and to support reading in the school. As you were appointed as principal of the school only a number of weeks before the previous inspection, you have now had the time to begin implementing your vision for school improvement.

At the time of the last inspection, the curriculum at key stage 3 was not broad and ambitious. In several subjects, leaders had not identified the key knowledge they expected pupils to learn. Since then, you have acted swiftly to ensure that the curriculum in all subjects focuses more clearly on the key knowledge that pupils must learn. You have also increased the number of subjects that pupils study in Year 9 to include all the subjects of the national curriculum. This has ensured that pupils all study a broad curriculum throughout key stage 3. During the previous inspection, weaker readers did not routinely receive the help they needed to read with accuracy. The school has invested in a programme to help to identify, track and support these pupils. Plans are in place to provide bespoke support for pupils to help develop their reading fluency and confidence in decoding. A number of strategies have been implemented to develop a wider love of reading in the school. This includes the current building of a new library.

You, and your leaders, have focused on the school's key priorities for improvement. You have made changes systematically and carefully to ensure that these become embedded in the culture of the school. You have also been careful to manage the workload and well-being of staff in the school during this process of change. Staff have embraced the positive changes in the school and feel part of the process. The trust has provided support and developmental opportunities to help facilitate the school improvement process.

One of your key areas of improvement has been developing the culture of the school. During the previous inspection low level disruption was sometimes tolerated and at times unsettled learning. Through the development of the 'Hewens spirit', you have developed a positive culture. This has helped all members of the community to understand the school's expectations. No low-level disruption was observed during this visit and pupils spoke positively about behaviour in lessons and around the school site.

You have developed a comprehensive careers programme in the school. During the last inspection it was found that older pupils did not have consistent access to careers advice. There is now a clear programme that provides all pupils with comprehensive advice and guidance.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, and the CEO of the Rosedale Hewens Academy Trust, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Hillingdon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Simon Conway
His Majesty's Inspector