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13 November 2015

Mr Peter Shaw
Headteacher
Carisbrooke College
Mountbatten Drive
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 5QU

Dear Mr Shaw

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to 12 November 2015

Following my visit to your school on 12 November 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in March 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, a group of middle leaders and four members of the governing body, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I evaluated a range of documentation, including the college's action plan and assessment information. Together we visited a number of classes, where I spoke to students about their learning. I had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.

Context

An assistant headteacher left the college at the end of last term.

Main findings

Since the last inspection, you have worked with a relentless drive to address the areas for improvement. Aply supported by a skilled senior leadership team, you have drawn up a precise and comprehensive action plan. It shows who is responsible for delivering improvements and there are appropriate timescales and measures of success along the way. As a result, everyone is clear about their responsibilities and your expectations for rapid improvement. Leaders have communicated effectively the contribution that all staff have to make to college life. For example, leaders expect all staff to maintain the college list of 'non-negotiables' for effective student learning.

Leaders have taken robust steps to improve teaching. They ensure that teachers receive clear feedback on what they need to do to develop their practice. Teachers benefit from a wide range of bespoke training and support, including from the local authority. Teaching is improving; a much greater proportion is good and inadequate teaching has been eradicated. Leaders ensure that good practice is shared more effectively across the school; for example, subject leaders regularly use meeting time to share practice from their departments with other colleagues.

Examination results for 2015 show significant and rapid improvement in students' achievement. The proportion of students gaining five good GCSEs doubled from 2014 and was close to the national average. The proportions of students making expected progress in English and mathematics have significantly improved and are close to national figures. Gaps are closing between disadvantaged students and their classmates. Assessment information for current Year 11 students suggests these levels of progress will be maintained this year.

Improved assessment systems and detailed mapping of what students know and can do, mean teachers and leaders identify and address gaps in students' knowledge more rapidly and effectively. Students benefit from a greater range of support; for example individual progress interviews and Easter revision classes in Year 11, to help them prepare for examinations.

Middle leaders are becoming more effective. The valuable support they have from senior leaders and external advisers is helping them to be clearer about their responsibilities, to have confidence to carry out their roles and to take the initiative to make improvements. More rigorous performance management processes mean these leaders are more able to hold teachers to account for the progress students make in their class.

Behaviour is improving. During my visit, students were focused in lessons and talked articulately about their work and what they need to do to improve. Behaviour expectations and the college policy are being more consistently applied by staff. As a result, the number of 'on call' requests for senior staff to deal with disruptive behaviour have reduced. Exclusion rates remain too high. A small number of students continue to challenge the college's expectations of behaviour. Senior leaders have extended the range of specialist support available to these students, and early indications are that this is having a positive impact on their behaviour.

Attendance has improved and is currently in line with national figures. The proportion of students who are persistently absent has fallen compared to figures for the same period last year. Leaders have effectively raised the profile and importance of good attendance with students and their parents.

Leaders provide a greater range of opportunities for students' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development across the curriculum. More visits and trips are available to students, for example theatre visits and trips to other countries. Each of the college houses is linked to a foreign country in order to expand students' understanding of cultures other than their own.

Governors share your commitment to improving the college rapidly. They provide a useful level of challenge and support; they already have questions formulated for when assessment information is updated later this term, regarding the accuracy of teachers' predictions of students' progress.

Ofsted may carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The local authority provides a comprehensive and relevant range of support to the college which is valued by senior and middle leaders. In particular, this work has helped leaders to write sharply focused plans for improvement and develop the curriculum to address gaps in students' knowledge and understanding.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Hampshire.

Yours sincerely

Lisa Moore
Her Majesty's Inspector