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Mrs McIlroy
The Mountbatten School
Whitenap Lane
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Dear Mrs McIlroy

Short inspection of The Mountbatten School

Following my visit to the school on 25 September 2018 with Ann Fearon and Suzanne Richards, Ofsted Inspectors, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in March 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your principled and aspirational leadership embeds a culture of care for the individual with high academic standards. You are determined to provide high-quality education for all your pupils regardless of their circumstances or ability. You balance effectively your pursuit of excellence with the well-being of staff and pupils. Therefore, staff at the school respect and trust you and your leadership team. Morale is high at your inclusive school, and everyone shares your determination to provide the best for every pupil.

There is a stimulating and challenging ethos in the school which enables pupils to make strong progress and achieve well. Your focus goes beyond ensuring that pupils leave with good examination results. Your innovative curriculum, that maintains pupils' interest in a broad range of academic and creative subjects, prepares pupils well for their next steps in education or training. The staff at the school provide an impressive range of well-attended clubs and activities. Pupils' participation in musical, drama and sporting activities is a strength of the school. These extra activities, which support academic as well as personal development, are valued by pupils and staff.

Pupils continue to behave well at the school. They wear their uniform smartly and take good care of their school environment. In lessons, we saw pupils working hard and persevering with challenging topics. Pupils told inspectors that they are proud of their school. Most pupils attend very regularly, and leaders are determined in supporting the few pupils whose attendance needs to improve. One Year 11 pupil, voicing the opinions of a group of pupils, said, 'We don't want

to leave, the teachers are so nice and want to help us.' In another meeting pupils told us, 'We really like it here, we are doing much better now we are here.'

Since the last inspection, leaders have developed effective systems to monitor the quality of teaching closely and to check how well it contributes to strong progress. As a result, leaders know the many strengths of the school, including the very impressive progress made by pupils in mathematics and science. You also know where you can make further improvement, such as helping pupils with additional specific needs to make faster progress.

Leaders use effective systems to access and track pupils' progress regularly. This ensures that any pupils at risk of falling behind are quickly spotted. A wide range of effective additional help is then provided to help pupils who need to catch up.

Governors provide strong challenge and support to you and other leaders. They visit the school regularly and analyse pupils' achievement thoroughly. They understand well the school's strengths, but are also aware of those areas where there is room for improvement, such as the progress of some boys in English. Governors take a professional and reflective approach to their roles, for example by attending relevant up-to-date training. They are ambitious for the school and actively support leaders to secure funds to improve the school environment.

Parents and pupils speak highly of the school, and most parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, said that they would recommend the school to other parents. One observed that, 'There is lots of support at every stage, amazing opportunities for academic and sports trips as well as amazing music and drama.'

Safeguarding is effective.

Governors and the leadership team ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and meet statutory requirements. Records are detailed, up to date and of a high quality. Before appointing staff, leaders carry out all the required employment checks. All staff and governors are trained effectively on how to keep pupils safe from abuse, sexual exploitation, and in the 'Prevent' duty.

A dedicated and highly skilled team of staff works with determination and sensitivity, alongside pupils, parents and external agencies to support the more vulnerable pupils. All staff monitor closely pupils' welfare.

The curriculum prepares pupils well for managing their own safety. Carefully structured activities in lessons, tutor time and assemblies support pupils' personal development effectively. Leaders are rightly planning activities to develop further pupils' understanding of the potential dangers of radicalisation and extremism. The pupils who inspectors spoke to have a good understanding of staying safe, and appreciate the support given by staff.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, my colleagues and I focused on the following lines of enquiry: how effectively leaders are improving pupils' progress in English; how effectively leaders have responded to the last inspection by improving the progress of pupils in mathematics; and the extent to which the progress of disadvantaged pupils is improving.
- After the English GCSE results dropped in 2017, you acted effectively to improve the rate of progress of pupils in English. There are well-judged plans in place to improve teaching and learning for all pupils in English. Leaders' current assessments, and work that inspectors saw in books and lessons, show that pupils now make stronger progress in English. Pupils in key stage 4 who need additional help are given the support that they need to achieve well in their English GCSE examinations. As a result, English GCSE results improved overall in 2018, and girls achieved impressive results. However, a small group of boys did not make the same strong progress. You are now, rightly, working to ensure that all boys make rapid progress in English.
- At the time of the last inspection, you were asked to improve pupils' progress in mathematics. You have improved the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics, as seen in the very strong progress made by pupils in recent years. The work that inspectors saw in pupils' books, evidence gathered during visits to lessons, and leaders' apparently reliable current assessments all indicate that pupils continue to make impressive progress in mathematics.
- You use the pupil premium grant wisely to support the academic and personal development of disadvantaged pupils. Governors evaluate rigorously the effectiveness of leaders' actions to improve the progress of vulnerable pupils. For example, disadvantaged pupils in Year 8 are given effective help from external mentors. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is tracked regularly, and teachers give effective, appropriate help if a pupil's progress slows. As a result, leaders' current assessment information and the work we saw in lessons show that the progress of most disadvantaged pupils is now sound. However, there are a few pupils whose circumstances make them particularly vulnerable and whose progress remains weak. Your determined efforts to improve their academic progress are yet to be realised.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- recent improvements in teaching English continue to accelerate the progress of boys to match the strong progress made by girls
- teachers continue to strengthen the support given to the small group of pupils whose circumstances make them particularly vulnerable, so that their achievement and attendance improve.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hampshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Anne Turner
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with you, leaders, governors and staff, and spoke to groups of pupils, both formally and informally. We visited lessons to observe pupils' learning, accompanied by senior leaders, and looked at the quality of work in pupils' books. My colleagues and I observed pupils at breaktime and lunchtime and as they left school. We considered documents about safeguarding, attendance, current pupils' progress and governors' work. The outcomes of a pupil questionnaire, the staff survey, and 135 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, were also considered.