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1 November 2016

Mrs Sarah Bone  
Headteacher  
Headlands School  
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YO16 6UR

Dear Mrs Bone

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Headlands School**

Following my visit to your school on 11 October 2016, 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 December 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 last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- eliminate the inconsistencies in the impact of leadership, teaching and assessment on pupils' learning and progress across groups and subjects, particularly for the most able pupils, and in science and humanities
- increase the impact of strategies to improve the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and the progress, from their starting points, of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who access alternative provision
- reduce persistent absence and increase the impact of strategies to stamp out the disruptive and defiant behaviour of a minority of pupils which is leading to a disproportionately high number of exclusions, detentions and isolations.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, discussions were held with you and several senior leaders, four members of the governing body, the local authority improvement partner and a headteacher supporting the school's improvement. I spoke to pupils, and scrutinised their work. I also examined documentation relating to the actions the school has taken to tackle the areas requiring improvement, attendance, governance, assessment and pupil progress information. I observed teaching and learning in all year groups, including the sixth form, over 15 different lessons across nine subjects.

## **Context**

Since December 2015 there have been many changes in staffing, including nine new heads of department, a deputy headteacher, three assistant headteachers and a new chair of the governing body. There are a number of supply staff covering absent teachers. There were a number of staff redundancies in the summer term of 2016. From September 2016, the curriculum was adapted to a three-year key stage 4 format.

## **Main findings**

The collective efforts of senior leaders and staff, the local authority, governors and a partner school are having a positive impact on improving the quality of provision the school provides and pupils' academic outcomes. The tenacious and coherent approach of the headteacher is spearheading the school's drive to get to good effectively. This journey has been hamstrung to an extent by financial constraints and some turbulence in staffing, which have affected the continuity in pupils' learning and the impact of subject leadership. Nevertheless, there is clear evidence of progress being made against the areas highlighted for improvement at the last section 5 inspection. Leaders are holding staff to account more rigorously for the quality and impact of their work. Refinements to the curriculum, improved coaching and mentoring of staff and assessment, monitoring and evaluation procedures are paying dividends.

Much of the teaching observed focused sharply on supporting pupils to meet their challenging targets. The support systems in place mean that more pupils at risk, or who have already fallen behind, are identified quickly and given suitable support. Similarly, some of the most effective practice in the school is being disseminated to improve teaching consistency and quality. You know that the momentum created needs to be sustained and built on going forward, and that it is imperative you eradicate the remaining inconsistent practice and impact.

The quality and impact of teaching and curriculum provision in key stage 3 and key stage 4 is improving. Credible assessment information indicates that increasing numbers of pupils are making more rapid progress towards their challenging targets. This was triangulated with observations of teaching and learning and

scrutiny of pupils' work. Teachers have higher expectations of pupils and are setting more demanding work. Skilful questioning challenges pupils to think more deeply about their learning.

Some informative marking and assessment helped pupils to understand their next steps in their learning and how to improve the quality of their work. I witnessed a geography lesson where pupils were given the opportunity to apply and consolidate their mathematical knowledge and skills, which they did effectively. However, there is a degree of inconsistency in outcomes across groups and subjects which needs ironing out, especially for the most able pupils.

The provisional key stage 4 outcomes indicate that pupils' attainment and the progress they made from their starting points is better than the Year 11 cohort who left last year. This is because the 2015 cohort's progress across subjects was significantly below average, particularly in humanities subjects, whereas the 2016 cohort's attainment and progress indicators are in the broadly average range. You are aware of the need to ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make more rapid progress, as they need to catch up to the standards attained by other pupils nationally with the same starting points. The difference has diminished but there is more work to do in this regard. You satisfied me that pupils who access alternative provision make great strides in their social and emotional development. The challenge for you is to have compelling evidence that you affect their academic development in the same way.

There is strong evidence that the sixth form is becoming more effective. Improved teaching has led to much improved academic outcomes in 2016. Students' attainment was high and they made good progress from their starting points. For example, 96% of students gained an A\* to C grade. The impact of the better information, advice and guidance that students received is reflected in the 93% retention rate. The students themselves report that they have been well supported in choosing appropriate courses. In 2016, 97% of Year 13 students gained a place at university. You recognise that there is work to do to improve success rates in science and history.

Pupils' attendance is improving, particularly that of disadvantaged pupils. However, the persistent absence of a small, but hard-to-reach, minority of pupils is skewing your overall figures. The same is true in relation to the poor behaviour of a small but stubborn minority of pupils who choose to flout the school's rules. I recognise that you are frustrated by what you feel is a lack of external support, but you need to ensure that your strategies have greater impact.

Members of the governing body satisfied me that they have robust systems to challenge as well as support the school's drive to improve. They have an accurate view of the school's current effectiveness and the remaining issues. They appreciate that despite some encouraging recent successes there is still a long way to go before the school can present a compelling case that it provides a good quality of

education overall. It is essential all groups of pupils make good or better progress in all subjects and that the school ensures that pupils' behaviour is consistently good.

Until further notice the school should email a termly progress report to me.

### **External support**

The key action taken by the local authority has been to commission the headteacher from the outstanding Fulford School to work with Headlands' senior leaders. This is enhancing the impact of the school's strategic planning and operational leadership. The current local authority adviser linked to the school monitors and evaluates the impact of the school's action plan and has an accurate view of the successes, remaining shortcomings and risks to further improvement.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for East Riding of Yorkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Young  
**Senior Her Majesty's Inspector**