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Mrs Hannah Albery
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Albery

Short inspection of Yarborough Academy

Following my visit to the school on 6 March 2018, 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 July 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since joining the school in September 2017, you have had a significant impact on the school's journey towards being the best it can be for pupils in your care. Your aspirations for the school are high. You inspire the same high ambition among staff, all of whom feel proud to work at the school. Parents and carers speak highly of the school. Those I spoke with and those who submitted free-text information in response to Ofsted's online questionnaire were very positive in their views and happy with the success their children enjoy there. As one explained to me, 'If my children are happy and doing well, you can't ask for more. It's brilliant here and it seems to be getting better and better all the time!'

You have initiated school improvements effectively. The areas of improvement in the school's previous inspection regarding raising pupils' outcomes in writing and increasing the proportion of outstanding teaching, are being addressed well. The school is a happy hive of industry where pupils and staff feel respected and valued. Relationships throughout are very positive and there is an ethos of high regard for the needs of others. Pastoral care for staff and pupils is strong, and against this secure backcloth everyone feels well supported. Your expectations of everyone are high. To that end you provide the training and support staff need to secure good progress among all pupils. You lead the school very effectively and inspire confidence in others to do their best. Senior leaders value the trust you place in them to improve their areas of responsibility. Staff and governors all support you fully in initiating changes that benefit pupils in both their personal development and their academic achievement. Pupils feel safe and well cared for at school because they trust all staff and know they are there to help them.

From their below-typical starting points on entry into the Nursery, children have a richly engaging experience in the early years and make good progress. They enter Year 1 with skills and knowledge typical for their age. Following a decline at key stage 1 in pupils' outcomes at the end of 2017 from above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics in 2016, current pupils are making good progress. A good number, including disadvantaged pupils, are working at greater depth in their learning. Pupils are on track to achieve well in the national tests this year. The picture is equally positive at key stage 2, particularly in the rising number of pupils working at greater depth in reading, which was a relative weakness in 2017. The school's actions to improve the teaching of reading, particularly to engage boys more effectively, are having an impact. In 2017, no disadvantaged pupils were found to be working at greater depth in reading, writing or mathematics. Based on the school's in-house assessments and work in pupils' books, the current picture is convincingly stronger. The lower performance of the boys compared with that of the girls in reading and writing is still there, but the difference is not as pronounced as in 2017. The school is addressing this, but the low aspirations of some less confident readers and writers among the boys remain a priority for improvement.

Your school's project-based approach to the curriculum, interlaced with the teaching of the discrete skills of phonics, literacy and numeracy, is highly popular with pupils. Even those hesitant in their reading and writing are drawn in by their keenness to explore ideas through practical activities that make the learning more concrete. Displays around the school reflect a highly creative, engaging environment, where learning is a 'journey' to discover, for example in Year 5, 'How Viking are we?' or in Year 4, 'How green is our earth?' A group of pupils explained to me most emphatically that this was 'all about saving the planet from deforestation and pollution'. One pupil added, 'We don't really do maths and English here, we just do projects.' Star-rated challenges provide opportunities for pupils to deepen their skills and understanding step by step at a pace to suit their needs, and leaders initiate support where pupils are at risk of falling behind their targets.

Teaching is consistently good, with examples of outstanding practice evident in many areas. The teaching of mathematics is good throughout the school, and pupils' above-average outcomes at the end of both key stages confirm this. Outcomes in writing are also above average at the end of Year 6. Pupils write up their accounts in projects confidently and build on the secure foundation of the basic literacy skills they learn in the early years and key stage 1. They apply their grammar, punctuation and spelling skills accurately. The teaching of phonics supports pupils' early reading well. Pupils read regularly at school. Teachers encourage them to read at home by rewarding their efforts. Leaders have introduced a wider range of fiction and non-fiction texts to engage boys, particularly those who find reading a challenge. However, a few boys admit that they do not choose to read if not required to. The school could do more to gain the support of parents in encouraging pupils to read regularly at home.

Governors are very committed to the school and have the best interests of pupils, parents and staff at heart at all times. They are regular visitors to the school. They listen to pupils read and talk to them about their learning. Governors have a fair overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are very confident that the senior leaders can improve the school further. However, governors could do more to question pupils' progress data and to check that the actions leaders are taking to ensure good progress among all pupils are

having the impact they should. Shortfalls in the performance of boys, including some disadvantaged boys, still remain. Differences are not diminishing quickly enough for a few of these pupils to be as well prepared for secondary school as they should be.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. All governors and staff understand their statutory responsibilities to keep children safe and carry out these roles effectively. Pupils are kept safe in school and learn how to stay safe outside and at home. Staff are particularly vigilant in safeguarding the well-being of disadvantaged pupils, who are often the most vulnerable. Leaders meticulously check the suitability of staff to work at the school and update records. Those responsible for safeguarding ensure that all procedures are followed diligently and take prompt action where necessary to alert other authorities if concerns arise. Leaders make sure that they provide guidance for children and families on how to stay healthy and safe, including their emotion and mental well-being. The learning mentor and other staff follow up pupil absences promptly if parents have not notified the school in time for registration. Leaders instigate legal action where necessary to ensure that pupils attend regularly. Policies related to keeping pupils safe are up to date and readily accessible to parents. They keep parents informed regarding the school's safeguarding procedures in the event of concerns arising about any children or their family.

The school takes good care of all its pupils. Pupils say that they feel safe and well looked after at school. They say that teachers and other staff are always kind and caring and teach them how to stay safe in school and outside. Pupils learn about internet safety and cyber bullying and know the risks posed by social media sites. They know not to disclose personal information or post photographs on the internet, because people might use this information for bad purposes. While they know not to use social media sites at their age, a few admitted that they have access to such sites at home. Younger children know not to talk to or go with strangers and to report any such incidents to parents or teachers immediately, as these people might be dangerous. Pupils know that bullying in any form is unacceptable and say that teachers deal with such incidents very firmly if pupils report it. Parents say that the school takes good care of their children, and staff tell them if they have any concerns. If required, leaders alert other agencies promptly.

Inspection findings

- Following the decline in pupils' outcomes in 2017 at key stage 1 and inconsistencies evident in the key stage 2 outcomes that year, I examined the school's pupil progress data thus far this year. Current pupils are making good progress at both key stages. A significant proportion are set to exceed expected levels. The school's most recent in-school assessments and pupils' workbooks reflect a more positive outcome this year for all pupils, including those achieving at greater depth. However, there remains a difference between the lower performance of the boys and that of the girls. Outcomes for children in the early years are good. An increasing number of children are working at levels above those typical for their age. Your actions to tackle inconsistencies in pupils' progress are proving effective.

- I examined the progress of disadvantaged pupils, who in 2017 failed to achieve as well as non-disadvantaged pupils in the school and lagged behind all pupils nationally. The school uses its pupil premium funding to good effect. Many pupils attend before- and after-school clubs and engage in sporting and other activities to boost their confidence and resilience. Staff are very mindful of all pupils' personal circumstances as well as their academic needs. Staff provide effective support to address these needs, especially for those at risk of underachieving. These pupils are making good progress against their invariably low starting points. A good number, particularly among the girls, are confidently working at greater depth in all subjects. Expectations of some of the less confident boys in reading and writing could be higher.
- Given the inconsistencies over time in the achievement of different groups of pupils, I examined whether senior leaders were doing enough to secure good outcomes for pupils in all subjects and all key stages. Senior leaders monitor teaching and learning very effectively. You undertake classroom observations, regularly check teachers' planning and examine pupils' work to ensure that pupils are on track to achieve their targets. You and your deputy spent a considerable amount of time with me, observing pupils at work and sharing your evaluations of teaching and learning. Throughout the school, we saw pupils engaged fully in their learning and trying their best. A buzz of excitement in all classes indicated that pupils were happy in their work and keen to learn. We saw effective learning because teachers were well prepared and effective in holding pupils' interest. You have an accurate picture of pupils' progress because you and your senior leaders regularly discuss teaching and learning with teachers and pupils respectively. While most pupils achieve well, you agree that some less confident learners, mainly boys, could achieve more in their reading and writing.
- Finally I examined the teaching of reading across the school, because too few pupils achieved at a greater depth in 2017. The teaching of phonics in the early years and key stage 1 is good, and most pupils learn to read with confidence and fluency. A few of the less confident learners, mainly boys, find reading not to their liking and choose not to read if they can help it. While teachers create time and opportunity for pupils to read in school, these reluctant readers do not read frequently enough outside school to extend their skills sufficiently well, particularly when encountering new vocabulary or complex texts. Those hesitant in their reading sometimes struggle to make sense of their texts. They fail to use punctuation well enough to read with the fluency and expression that might enable them to enjoy reading more.
- You have taken effective action to move the school forward. Staff, governors, parents and pupils value being part of the school community. Pupils make good progress because teaching is always at least good. Outstanding practice is increasingly evident in all that you and your staff offer. Children in the early years make a flying start to their learning, and this firm foundation enables pupils to succeed in subsequent years. Pupils of all backgrounds and abilities are prepared well for their secondary schools.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the less confident learners among the boys achieve as well as all other pupils
- those boys who find reading taxing read more regularly and have the support they

need to become more confident readers

- they do more to engage parents in supporting their children's learning at home
- governors check that the actions that leaders take to accelerate pupils' progress have the impact they should, and question pupils' progress data more rigorously.

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

Yours sincerely

Rajinder Harrison
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher, all your staff, the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and two other governors. I also met with your senior leaders, including some subject leaders and other staff. I looked at documentation relating to pupils' progress and achievement, the school's improvement plan and safeguarding checks, policies and procedures. We discussed your evaluation of the school's effectiveness and examined the evidence to support this evaluation. I observed pupils in the playground, dining hall and classes. Together with your deputy headteacher, we visited all classes and discussed these observations. I looked at pupils' project books, spoke to pupils about their work and listened to them read. I also met with pupils to get their views of the school and took into account the views of the 46 pupils who submitted responses to Ofsted's online pupils' questionnaire. I considered the 29 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Parent View, the school's own survey of parents' views and the 22 free-text messages submitted by parents to Ofsted. I also took into account the 22 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.