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Mr Paul Rowe
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Rowe

Short inspection of Paull Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 2 May 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 November 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Providing high-quality care for pupils and promoting successful relationships across the school community are at the heart of your leadership. You bring positivity and a dash of humour to your conversations with pupils and staff: they are happy to buy into the journey of improvement with you. Parents and carers are positive about the school's sense of community and are pleased with, and confident in, the quality of education offered by the school. Many willingly engage in fund-raising activities to support improvements in school facilities. The pupils say that friendships are a strength of their school. Certainly, during my visit, pupils were kind and thoughtful towards one another. One child said, 'Some children are new to our school. You are very welcome here, from the moment you start until when you finish.'

The partnership between school leaders and the local authority, including the involvement of the Ebor Academy Trust, brokered by the local authority, is having a positive effect on the quality of leadership and teaching and learning within the school. You are mindful of some of the dips in pupils' performance in the past and know that you need to work together to ensure that all pupils make the very best progress they can during their time with you. You are receptive to guidance and support that will help you to build on the existing knowledge and skills within the school, and value these partnerships with other schools and the local authority. Staff speak confidently about how work with colleagues in other schools has strengthened their own practice. For example, the lead teacher for English has highlighted that aspects of reading, writing and spelling are priorities for

improvement, and says that the visits to other schools have supported the direction that these improvements have taken.

Governors are positive about the school's role and place in the community and the care and nurture provided by the staff. As well as being supportive of the work staff and leaders do, they are not afraid to challenge leaders when they see that aspects of the school's work need improvement. They have a good understanding of how well pupils achieve at the end of each key stage. However, they are not as clear about the progress that pupils of different abilities are making in different year groups. This is because, although leaders have established a comprehensive system to check which pupils are on track to achieve their end-of-year target, they have not presented this information to governors in a way that demonstrates how lower and higher ability pupils are doing in relation to their starting points. We agreed, that, as you already gather this information, it would be helpful to analyse it and present it in more detail to check that pupils of all abilities are making good progress.

Improving pupils' reading skills has been on your agenda for the last couple of years. It was an area highlighted for improvement at your last inspection. This year, you have overhauled the way you teach reading. You have sought external advice to ensure that your actions are making a positive difference to pupils' skills and confidence in reading. In addition, you are focusing on promoting the pleasure that can be gained from books and how reading can support pupils' learning across the curriculum. Leaders have put a number of new strategies and systems in place, and have established starting points for each child. Using a range of evidence throughout the inspection, my findings are that this work is, overall, having a positive impact on raising achievement in reading. However, although some checks are taking place on the actions being taken, these are not thorough enough or well enough evaluated to give a comprehensive view of what is working well and what needs further focus.

I was keen to see how leaders and staff ensure that pupils get off to a good start in reading and writing. Teachers model sounds in phonics accurately, quickly picking up and addressing any inaccurate sounding. Consequently, most pupils use sounds successfully to help them to decode new words accurately. Pupils have the opportunity to transfer the new sounds they have learned into writing. However, adults do not model writing letters and words as effectively. Pupils are often not sure how to form letters, and when they make a mistake, although it is sometimes spotted by adults, pupils are not shown how to make improvements. As a result, pupils' poor letter formation goes on unchecked and inhibits the flow of their writing as they move through school.

A new school approach to developing pupils' spelling, building on their earlier work in phonics, is paying off. Pupils have work that is well matched to their abilities and work hard with their peers and the adults in class to improve their own scores. Pupils are starting to apply the spellings they have learned in their general writing. As pupils move through Year 2 and key stage 2, they are given clear reminders and direction about how to improve their work. Pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 were able to confidently tell me what they needed to do to improve their writing. For example, a child in Year 3 said, 'If I use more adventurous adjectives, my writing will be more

exciting to the reader.’ When these pupils make mistakes in their written work, adults quickly pick these up and the pupils are given clear guidance about how to improve.

Most notable when listening to pupils read is their confidence in talking about books. Pupils naturally engage in conversations about the characters and what they think will happen next. They appreciate the humour or build-up of suspense. They can talk about how the author has directed the reader’s thoughts and feelings through their use of language, punctuation and phrasing. It is clear that these kinds of discussions are commonplace in lessons. Pupils also say that they have many opportunities to read throughout the week, as well as times when adults read to them. Some of the pupils say that they particularly enjoy it when adults read to them because, ‘the teachers bring the stories to life’. The lead teacher and I discussed how quickly the lower ability pupils are given support to catch up with their peers. We agreed that sometimes, pupils do not have books that are well matched to the phonics they have learned. They therefore lack confidence when given a ‘new book’ and try to use too many cues other than phonics to work out new words. This inhibits their fluency, which in turn affects their understanding of what they are reading.

Safeguarding is effective.

The recruitment of, and checks on, new staff and volunteers are well organised and thorough. This work is supported by regular checks and national updates from the local authority, which also provides guidance and support on health and safety requirements.

All staff receive regular training and updates on safeguarding issues: everyone knows what to do if they have a concern about a child or a member of staff. Records of concerns are shared appropriately with key safeguarding personnel within school and the local authority. They are stored securely, checked regularly and fit for purpose.

Pupils are able to explain a variety of ways they are taught to keep themselves and others safe. They talked about a recent emergency situation within the school and how teachers made sure that they were very well looked after and that everyone remained calm.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and teachers think carefully about where teaching assistants are deployed to ensure that pupils of all abilities and needs receive the support they require. Teaching assistants provide effective care, guidance and support, working closely with the teacher to ensure that all pupils receive good-quality input and direction in their learning.
- Leaders have looked at creative ways to engage pupils in writing, particularly mindful that, in some cohorts, boys have not achieved as highly as girls in reading and writing. Working with other schools in the Ebor Academy Trust,

leaders and teachers have introduced big writing books for pupils to produce 'their best quality work' at school and at home. Pupils explain how whole-school topics and themes are set to appeal to a variety of interests. For example, recent themes have included Star Wars and fantasy. These books encourage pupils to do their best work. They give parents a clear insight into the progress their child is making in writing and what they are working on getting better at.

- Pupils' attendance is at least in line with the national average each year, and often better. This is because leaders and parents work successfully together to instil the importance of good attendance and the positive impact this has on learning. Where a pupil's attendance does slip, you meet with parents to discuss the support for the pupil or their family that is needed, and how improvements can be made.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers model effectively how sounds in phonics are transferred to writing, ensuring that pupils form letters correctly and know how to improve their work
- lower ability pupils, particularly those in early years and key stage 1, have books that are well matched to the sounds they have learned so that they can become confident and fluent readers
- leaders refine the assessment information they share, and make careful checks on the actions they are putting in place, to ensure that pupils of all abilities are making strong progress across subjects.

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

Kate Rowley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this one-day inspection, we spent time together in classrooms and looking at the quality of pupils' work. We discussed your evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. We looked at the success of the actions you and your team have taken. I held discussions with three members of your governing body and had a separate meeting with the local authority school improvement partner. I met with the lead teacher for English and school administrative staff. I spoke to pupils about their learning and the school, and listened to pupils read. I spoke to

parents before school started and took into account the seven responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I reviewed a number of school documents, including the written evaluation of the school's work, documents relating to checks on the quality of teaching and learning, school assessment information, minutes of meetings of the governing body, attendance information, a range of policies and safeguarding information.