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Mr Neville Rice
Principal
Scartha Junior Academy
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Dear Mr Rice

Short inspection of Scartha Junior Academy

Following my visit to the school on 18 December 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 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. There has been a considerable number of staffing changes. In September 2017, governors appointed two new assistant principals. Since the last inspection, you have also appointed five new teachers. Leadership and management have been strengthened. Staff are proud to work at the school and work effectively as a team.

Leaders, teachers and support staff put all pupils at the heart of the school community. You are passionate about providing pupils with learning experiences so that they develop a thirst for 'life-long learning'. For example, teachers use classrooms well to support pupils' independent learning skills. Resources are readily available and vocabulary, prompts for learning skills and questions are displayed.

Furthermore, you have created an ethos of kindness throughout the school. This is evident, for example, in the way that pupils welcome visitors. During my visit, many pupils wished me a good morning or afternoon and asked me if I was having a nice day. You know your pupils and their families well and relationships in the school are strong. Pupils are well-mannered. They behave well and show very good attitudes to learning. Pupils' high-levels of enthusiasm were clearly evident in the lessons that I observed. They are friendly, get along well together and take pride in their work. I could see the high levels of enthusiasm that pupils had. Pupils were proud to tell me that they enjoy their learning and that while it is 'tricky', it is also 'fun'.

You and your new leadership team have very successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection. You were asked, for example, to raise pupils' achievement in writing so that a greater proportion of pupils reached the higher standards by the end of Year 6. Together, you and your team revised the approach to the teaching of writing. Staff received appropriate training so that they could plan learning effectively and adhere to your new approaches. Opportunities for pupils to write at length and more regularly, for example, have been extended. Through your carefully researched curriculum, projects are used effectively so that pupils' knowledge and skills are used to write for a real purpose. Pupils critique each other's writing, learning effectively from one another. They talked proudly about the progress they make in writing, such as in their 'Gold Books'. Pupils' outcomes in writing have significantly improved at the end of key stage 2. The progress that they make is now strong, and has been in recent years.

You, other leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and you have identified those areas that need further work. You know that improving pupils' achievement in reading, for example, is an important next step. Work is already under way, but there is more to do to make sure pupils achieve as well in reading as they do in writing.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders have created a culture of safeguarding which is underpinned by the school's ethos of kindness. Safeguarding policies are in place and you ensure that staff and governor training for child protection is up to date. Staff are vigilant and know what signs to look for, and leaders follow up any concerns in an appropriate and timely way. You offer a range of support for families. Parents and carers commented on how much they value this support. The vast majority of parents are positive about the school. Many commented on the high levels of care that their children receive.

Pupils feel safe in school and know how to stay safe, including when online. Pupils are clear about how to report any concerns that they may have, either through 'worry boxes' or by talking to a trusted adult in school. Pupils understand about different types of bullying and feel confident that any bullying incidents would be followed up and dealt with swiftly.

Inspection findings

- One of the areas we agreed to look at during my visit was how well pupils are doing in reading. This is because, in the past couple of years, pupils' achievement in reading has lagged behind that in writing and mathematics. In 2018, provisional data indicates that, while pupils' attainment and progress in reading improved, pupils in Year 6 did not make good progress from their previous starting points. A below average proportion of pupils reached the higher standards. You are already taking steps to remedy this. For example, you have created a positive culture of reading. Pupils say that they enjoy reading. They use

the school library and read regularly at home. In addition, teachers have recently undertaken training to improve the teaching of higher-order reading skills, such as inference and deduction. This is starting to have a positive impact on improving achievement in reading even further. Even so, sometimes, the texts that pupils are given to read lack the challenge needed to push them to reach the higher standards of attainment. Pupils' progress in reading, therefore, is still variable.

- Teachers have a good understanding what pupils know and can do. They use this skilfully to plan and adapt activities and target their questions to meet pupils' varying needs and abilities. Teaching assistants make an effective contribution to support pupils' learning. Although different groups of pupils are achieving well overall, disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as others in the school. In Year 6 in 2018, their progress was slightly slower than other pupils in the school, especially in reading.
- You know your school very well and school improvement plans focus on the correct priorities. You have, for example, established a clear plan of action to improve the achievement of pupils in mathematics. Your plans accurately and clearly pinpoint what actions you need to take, by whom and by when. However, plans are not focused clearly enough on checking and evaluating the impact of actions taken on improving pupils' outcomes, such as the impact of the pupil premium spending on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. There is scope to further improve this aspect of the school's work.
- Governors are committed to the school. They undertake regular visits to school and take part regularly in appropriate professional development, such as the recent training on the teaching of reading. Governors are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and about areas that need to be improved. They offer appropriate challenge and support to school leaders. An external partner is used to support them further in challenging the school. This partnership, for the most part, is having a beneficial impact. However, making sure that both senior and middle leaders are given further challenge about the impact of their actions on whole-school improvement is an important next step.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality of teaching and learning in reading continues to improve so that pupils make consistently good progress and the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards by the end of Year 6 increases
- school improvement plans, including the plans for spending the pupil premium, are evaluated clearly for impact on pupils' outcomes
- senior and middle leaders receive more wide-ranging and stronger challenge about the impact of their actions on whole-school 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 North East Lincolnshire. This

letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Eleanore Pickard
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your senior leaders and governors. I also spoke to a range of parents and pupils. I listened to pupils read. Together, we conducted tours of the school and lessons, looking at pupils' work and observing their learning. I also, alongside senior leaders, conducted a scrutiny of pupils' work in a range of subjects.

I scrutinised and evaluated a range of documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and school improvement. I took account of the 44 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 43 free-text responses from parents. I also took account of the 12 responses to the staff questionnaire.