

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mr Michael McCluskie
Headteacher
Scalby School
Fieldstead Crescent
Newby
Scarborough
North Yorkshire
YO12 6TH

Dear Mr McCluskie

Short inspection of Scalby School

Following my visit to the school on 13 February 2019 with Richard Crane, Ofsted Inspector, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in April 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Over the last year, since your appointment as headteacher, you have shaped a thoughtful and skilled senior leadership team. This team has embraced your vision for the school. This vision is rooted in a clear moral purpose. You are dedicated to ensuring that every pupil receives an education of the highest quality. You and your team are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and use your analysis of a wide range of information to improve the provision and outcomes for pupils.

Staff morale is high. Many staff told us how much they welcome the open conversations about teaching and its continual improvement that take place very regularly across the school. They welcome the ways that you encourage the evaluation and sharing of what works.

The school's previous inspection in April 2012 identified the need to share the good and outstanding practice that exists in the school so that teaching focused on what pupils need to succeed more precisely. You have addressed this and continue to address this very successfully. You have introduced an approach to improving the quality of teaching that is very effective. It is rooted in the sharing of good practice, in a culture of sharing and openness. Staff welcome this coaching approach because it enables them to work together in a range of ways across the school. Working

together, they identify and share the approaches that work and ensure that pupils succeed. The approach is carefully and decisively linked to the assessment of teachers' performance and the detailed plans for school improvement. Increasingly, your team of teaching assistants are also involved in this dynamic approach. However, their involvement is still at an early stage.

Middle leaders play an important part in improving the quality of the provision across the school. They are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and skilled. They work with their teams to share good practice and they are both strategic in their planning and clear-sighted in their analysis of how effective their teams are. You and members of the senior leadership team support these colleagues effectively. You encourage middle leaders to work with other schools, with local colleges and with officers of the local authority. Because of this, middle leaders are increasingly confident that the judgements they make about the quality of teaching and its effect on learning are accurate. As a result, the quality of teaching is good and improving.

Pupils feel safe at school. Relationships between adults and pupils and between pupils are cordial and open. This means that there is an atmosphere of mutual respect and care in the school. This has a very positive impact on learning and pupils' progress. Pupils recognise and generally welcome the emphasis on good behaviour at the school. They are aware that good behaviour is the result of measured, consistent and carefully planned actions by you and your staff. These are rooted in a zero tolerance of unkind behaviour and a positive emphasis on mutual respect and care. This attitude was very evident in the classrooms inspectors visited. In these lessons, learning moved on swiftly because pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), felt at ease and knew that their views and contributions would be taken seriously. Teachers encourage pupils to develop and deepen their learning, skills and understanding through deft and, often demanding, questioning. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, rise to this challenge.

Pupils who, from time to time, find the Scalby standards of behaviour too testing are carefully supported. You have in place humane and very carefully monitored spaces for pupils who, for example, are returning to school after a fixed-term exclusion, are at risk of exclusion or are finding aspects of the school day challenging. When in this provision, they are very well supported by highly skilled staff. During the inspection I spoke with a number of these pupils and they were very complimentary about the kindness and understanding with which they were treated. They were also proud to talk of the skills they had developed.

The support that the school offers to pupils with SEND is effective. It is well-led. Clear strategies to improve further the provision for this group of pupils are in place. These actions are beginning to ensure their success and independence as learners. You, your team and governors are aware that more still needs to be done to ensure that pupils with SEND make consistently strong progress as they grow in confidence and develop further their independence and resilience as learners.

You have worked effectively and diligently to improve attendance at the school.

Historically, attendance has been an issue. Because of your actions and those of your staff, supported effectively by governors and the trust, attendance is improving consistently and is close to the national average. You and your team have put in place very detailed, yet straightforward, systems to monitor attendance. These help you identify irregular patterns of attendance quickly so that you can address the underlying causes. You have effectively supported parents and carers in understanding the importance of regular attendance on pupils' safety, well-being and outcomes through carefully targeted conversations and events at the school. You and your staff are tenacious in engaging with the parents of the small group of pupils whose attendance is still not yet good enough.

Governors know the school and the community it serves well. Working with the trust, they have developed a wide range of effective strategies that ensure that they know the school well. These include regular visits and developing links with middle leaders. Governors have also acted to deepen their levels of expertise by the judicious appointment of additional governors to work with leaders on specific aspects of the school's work, such as the quality of teaching and learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have established a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. You, all your staff and the governing body take your safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. You ensure that regular, effective training is provided for all staff and governors. As a result, they are up to date in their knowledge and understanding. You and your designated safeguarding leaders have forged strong and effective links with outside agencies. Your records of your dealings with these agencies are detailed and show your meticulous approach to this vital work. You engage with the local authority promptly and follow up safeguarding issues tenaciously.

You ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are meticulously kept and are of high quality.

Inspection findings

- There is very high-quality teaching in the school. Leaders ensure that this is shared through a range of careful strategies. Inspectors saw numerous examples of staff engaging with pupils to extend their knowledge and skills. Inspectors saw staff using questioning not only to check on pupils' understanding but also to deepen and extend their learning. Because relationships across the school are positive, staff can be challenging and insistent in the way they question pupils. Where staff expectations are high, pupils, supported by their peers, rise to the challenge.
- Pupils are very well behaved. They enjoy school and are, generally, very eager to learn. They are delighted to talk about their learning, including talking about their favourite books and authors. They also talk about their musical and artistic experience and expertise. Around school, they are polite and aware of the needs of others. They are appreciative of the work that adults do to keep them safe.

Pupils told us that they are alert to potential dangers because the school regularly reminds them how to keep safe through lessons and in assemblies. This includes how to stay safe when online.

- The parents and carers with whom we had contact were almost universally happy with the service the school offers their children. As one parent wrote, 'My children thrive here, one having moved from another school. They are challenged in their learning and make good progress.' A significant proportion of parents were very complimentary about how well staff knew their children and their needs. As one wrote, when describing how the school had responded when their child had a problem, 'I was reassured that in a large school they (leaders) made sure relevant staff knew my child...'
- The learning environment across the school is attractive and inviting, with many displays and celebrations of pupils' work. There is also helpful learning information to hand that underpins learning and gives pupils ready access to information about the topic at hand. However, inspectors did see some examples of poor presentation in pupils' books which, it appeared, had gone unchallenged by staff. There are also displays that remind pupils of the world beyond Scarborough and their important place as citizens of it.
- Pupil premium funding is well and effectively spent. As far as are possible, barriers to learning, well-being and access to learning are removed for disadvantaged pupils. This is because staff know these pupils and their needs well. They also know that these needs change from time to time because of their detailed monitoring of pupils' progress. This watchful attention to detail in the identification of pupils' needs and then a rapid response in addressing them is a strong aspect of the school's work.
- The provision for pupils with SEND is effective and very well led. These pupils are carefully and tenaciously supported both in class and in smaller group settings. Their progress is regularly monitored, and their parents are fully involved. Links with outside agencies and support beyond the school are strong. As a result, these pupils make generally good progress from their starting points.
- The leadership of teaching and learning is strong. You monitor the quality and effect of teaching very carefully to ensure that pupils make the progress that they should. You involve your middle and subject leaders fully in this. As a result, there is increasing clarity and precision in the follow-up work that you and other leaders undertake with members of staff to further improve the quality of their teaching. Staff value the training that they are given to improve their skills.
- Although improving because of effective action by leaders, attendance still needs to improve. Skilled and tenacious staff work effectively with pupils and families who, for one reason or another, find regular attendance challenging.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school continues to prioritise an effective, targeted offer for pupils with SEND, with an emphasis on further developing pupils as independent and resilient learners
- the school continues its rigorous and focused work to improve attendance by supporting the families of pupils who find regular attendance at school a challenge
- the school continues to embed improvement strategies to eradicate any remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and the presentation of pupils' work.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Evans
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with you and your senior leaders to discuss the school's effectiveness and what you have done to ensure that the school continues to improve.

Inspectors also discussed the service that the school offers to pupils with SEND. I met with two governors, including the chair of the governing body, and with the chief executive of the Scalby Learning Trust. Inspectors also met with a group of subject leaders and with colleagues responsible for attendance and the support of pupils with SEND. An inspector attended an assembly.

Inspectors read a range of documents, including your evaluation of the school's effectiveness. I also scrutinised the school's safeguarding systems, records and associated documents. I checked information about pupils' achievement along with evaluations of aspects of the school's work and minutes of meetings of the governing body.

In seven cases accompanied by a member of your senior team, inspectors visited 17 classes to observe teaching, learning and assessment. We checked pupils' progress in their books and folders. We talked formally with groups of pupils from Years 7 and 11. I listened to pupils reading and discussed their reading with them. We also talked informally with pupils in lessons and around the school at lunch and

breaktimes.

I considered the 44 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) and the 33 free-text comments from parents. I also considered a letter to the inspectors, written by a parent, about the service the school provides for her child.