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Ms Michaela Blackledge
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Dear Ms Blackledge

Short inspection of The Snaith School

Following my visit to the school on 5 April 2017 with Ofsted Inspector Rajinder Harrison, 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 March 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your arrival in September 2016, you have implemented a clear strategy for continued improvement based upon a vision of high expectations for all pupils. You have quickly identified areas for improvement and developed appropriate strategies to ensure that they are purposefully addressed. You have strengthened senior and middle leadership, giving leaders increased independence for driving improvement within clear systems of accountability. As a result, the capacity for sustained improvement is now much stronger. Through strong leadership, rigorous systems and effective teaching, pupils achieve good standards and are making good and improving progress.

The historical progress of pupils at the school has been strong. In 2015, all pupils, and the vast majority of key groups, made progress that was significantly better than that seen nationally. Upon your arrival, you inherited some dips in progress in areas such as mathematics and science. You immediately commissioned a review of mathematics teaching and fortified leadership in both subjects. As a result, teaching is much stronger in both subjects and pupils are making stronger rates of progress.

You and your team have grounded your vision of improvement in a sustained focus upon improving teaching and learning so that it effectively meets the needs of all pupils. For example, by foregrounding the high levels of attainment that many

pupils arrive with from primary school, you have made teachers plan more assiduously to meet the needs of their pupils and made them more accountable for their progress. Firmer accountability has been balanced with support and professional development, as you have encouraged teachers to become more outward looking in building partnerships and seeking good practice from other providers. Assessment is now more accurate and used more effectively in lessons to support pupils' progress. In many subjects, pupils regularly reflect upon their current progress and have a good understanding of the steps they can take to improve.

Middle leaders have increased responsibilities for checking the quality of planning and teaching and learning within their departments. They are assessing pupils' progress with greater accuracy and purpose. They have responded to the dip in performance in some subjects in 2016 by strengthening the curriculum to meet the demands of more challenging examinations and by pitching work more closely to meet pupils' needs. Planning is frequently thorough and increasingly attuned to the differing needs of pupils. Middle leaders are also working more cohesively together to develop skills of literacy and numeracy across subjects. You have given them greater opportunities to explore and develop improvement strategies while also ensuring that they are accountable through regular reviews of progress that test the impact of these strategies. This is contributing to improvements in the quality of teaching and in the rates of pupils' progress. However, these developments remain relatively new and more needs to be done to embed them in order to sustain the pace of improvement.

Your actions to accelerate academic progress have been complemented by your strong commitment to further enhance pupils' behaviour and welfare. You have recently received a gold award for the quality of your careers education and guidance, and the proportions of pupils who progress to education, employment or training are above those seen nationally. While behaviour and welfare were established strengths of the school, you have avoided complacency by seeking to strengthen support, such as your appointment of non-teaching mentors to provide support for vulnerable pupils. You have also brought fresh leadership to oversee the progress of disadvantaged pupils while forthcoming appointments will ensure that the provision and progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities will remain a key priority. These actions are contributing to more effectively coordinated provision which is contributing to improving progress for these pupils, although the overall impact is not yet consistent across all year groups.

Governors are committed to the success of the school and have embraced opportunities to strengthen their roles. Following a review of governance in summer 2016, governors reviewed their skills and their monitoring roles. As a result, they are much clearer in their areas of responsibility and in the methods that they use to hold leaders to account. Governors are now more adept in identifying their own priorities in committee meetings and in challenging underperformance. Governors ensure that there is a clear link between teachers' performance and pay progression. They value the openness and fresh challenge that the headteacher has

brought to the school as this enables them to check progress more accurately.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your team take your safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. Since your arrival, you have acted decisively to take essential and costly remedial action to improve the safety of the school site. You immediately employed security personnel to manage site access, installed a perimeter fence and are currently installing controlled vehicle and pedestrian barriers at the front of the site. Leaders and teachers promote a culture of safeguarding and are mindful of their responsibilities for pupils' welfare, particularly for vulnerable pupils. Rigorous checks are made on the suitability of staff. Staff and governors receive up-to-date training on key safeguarding issues. School leaders set clear school rules that promote a safe and respectful culture. The vast majority of pupils feel safe and well supported, although a minority of pupils, and parents, express concerns over some aspects of behaviour.

Inspection findings

- New leaders have worked resolutely to address some of the dips in performance they inherited in September 2016. By strengthening subject leadership, improving planning and teaching and introducing more accurate tracking of progress, pupils are making stronger progress and achieving better outcomes.
- Middle leaders have much clearer responsibilities for monitoring progress and tracking the performance of key groups of pupils within their subjects. They are more active in sharing good practice and have reviewed curriculum plans to ensure that most-able pupils are more thoroughly stretched.
- After a dip in performance in mathematics in 2016, pupils are now making better rates of progress. One of your first actions was to commission an external review of mathematics teaching. As a result, teachers have reviewed planning and assessment and this is leading to improving standards of teaching and learning. Teachers were seen modelling methods and solutions with clarity. Pupils, consequently, were confident in reflecting upon a variety of computational methods and applying them to increasingly complex questions. Work in books shows thorough curriculum coverage and frequent opportunities to practise examination tasks. Although improving, pupils' rates of progress remain lower than in English.
- Teaching in science and humanities shows many strengths through high expectations, strong questioning and the frequent opportunities teachers give pupils to explain their reasoning in verbal and written responses. At key stage 4, work in books reveals a picture of consistent progress, with frequent opportunities for pupils to apply their skills and knowledge. Leadership in these subjects is assured and reflects a concerted focus on school improvement. The strengths evident at key stage 4 are not consistently reflected in the quality of work in books at key stage 3.
- Professional development opportunities have been intensified in order to share good practice and build capacity for further improvement. Teachers moderate standards through their work with other schools and through the expertise that a

number of teachers have as examination board assessors. In many lessons, there was clear evidence that teachers had a strong understanding of the prior attainment of pupils and were using this to plan the next steps in their learning.

- Pupils demonstrate courtesy towards one another and adults. They routinely hold doors open for others and the vast majority conduct themselves in a calm and orderly manner on corridors and around the site. In conversation, pupils felt that standards of behaviour had improved and that the new leaders would not tolerate behaviours that would interrupt learning or undermine safety. Teachers engender positive behaviour in lessons and this supports effective learning as pupils listen attentively and respond keenly to questions. A minority of pupils and parents who responded to Ofsted's questionnaires believed that some pupils' behaviour was less positive, showing that more needs to be done to achieve greater levels of consistency.
- Pastoral leaders work closely to track pupils' attendance and pupils' welfare. Good levels of support are provided for vulnerable pupils, particularly for those with medical needs. Levels of attendance are above those seen nationally and levels of exclusions are below. There has been a slight increase in exclusions in the autumn term as you have shown zero tolerance for any behaviours that could undermine the safety of others. The attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is showing improvement, although the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is not improving as rapidly.
- Leaders are developing more individualised approaches to support the needs of disadvantaged pupils. An assistant headteacher now has discrete oversight of their provision and progress. She has developed a clearer picture of achievement gaps as disadvantaged pupils enter the school and is introducing stronger support and interventions to diminish gaps from an earlier stage. Teachers are more mindful of and accountable for the progress of disadvantaged pupils in their classes. As a result, there are signs that disadvantaged pupils are making improving progress and that attainment gaps are diminishing, although initiatives are at an early stage and differences remain in their rates of progress across a wide range of subjects.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and monitor their progress carefully. Staff have a clear awareness of who these pupils are and of the interventions that can support their progress. Individual case studies reveal that these pupils are making good progress from their starting points. In 2015, pupils who have special educational need and/or disabilities made significantly positive progress, but this did decline in 2016. New interventions are once again improving provision but new leadership will need to be embedded to further sustain this progress.
- Leaders have raised expectations for the progress and attainment of the most able pupils. You have emphasised their high levels of prior attainment and the accelerated progress these pupil must make in order to make good progress. Subject leaders have reviewed curriculum provision and intensified planning to more closely match these pupils' needs. Additional support has been provided for disadvantaged most-able pupils. There are many signs that the most able pupils

are making stronger progress in English, science and the humanities at key stage 4, although more needs to be done to further raise expectations, particularly at key stage 3. The progress of the most able pupils remains weaker in mathematics.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- further develop leadership at all levels, so that improvements in the quality of teaching and the curriculum can be securely embedded
- intensify actions to improve the attendance and rates of progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that differences between these pupils and other pupils nationally continue to diminish
- build upon recent actions to increase rates of progress for the most able pupils by providing them with consistent challenge from Year 7 onwards and in a wide range of subjects
- further enhance the high standards of behaviour and welfare across the school by listening closely to the minority of pupils and parents who express concerns over some aspects of behaviour.

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

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Kirtley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, we met with you, your senior leadership team and middle leaders. We also held a meeting with a group of pupils and talked to pupils less formally in lessons and at break times. We also met three members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair. I also met the school improvement adviser from the local authority. We undertook a learning walk with you and your deputy headteacher and carried out our own additional lesson observations. In addition to looking at pupils' work in lessons, we also looked separately in more detail at pupils' work in books and folders. We examined the school improvement plan as well as other documents, including the school's self-evaluation, assessment information, behaviour and attendance information and tracking of pupils' attainment and progress. We examined safeguarding documents, including the single central record of security and suitability checks on staff. We took into account 86 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 27 free-text responses from parents. We also took into account 208 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire and 51 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.